

## **2.0 CONTINUATION OF EXISTING MANAGEMENT DIRECTION AND ACTIONS BY LAND USE OR RESOURCE USES**

This chapter contains the management objectives and management actions that make up the decisions for the Great Divide resource area as found in the Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP), and includes specific descriptions of changes made to the RMP since its adoption in 1990. The chapter is divided into three sections: Section 2.1 contains the original RMP, with resource planning and management actions arranged in alphabetical order. Section 2.2 contains the amendments and maintenance edits and actions that have taken place since the Record of Decision (ROD) was signed in 1990. Section 2.3 contains information on initiatives and additional current management actions not described or included in the original RMP. New planning and management decisions include those on hazardous materials, noxious weeds, and fisheries. Each section is developed in the new alphabetical format (also used in Chapter 3.0) to assist in cross-referencing the original RMP actions, with amendments and maintenance actions, new initiatives, and the current management actions.

### **2.1 EXISTING MANAGEMENT DECISIONS FROM THE CURRENT RMP**

This section contains the RMP as it was when signed in 1990. The original document reproduced in this section records the decisions made by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for approximately 4 million acres of public land surface and 1 million acres of federal mineral estate administered by the BLM in the Great Divide Resource Area. (Note: The original acreages have been adjusted, see Introduction in Chapter 1.0 of the Management Situation Analysis [MSA].) All appendices referred to in this chapter have been renamed from the original RMP. For purposes of comparison and reference, Appendix I in the original RMP is included in this document as Appendix C, Appendix II is included in this document as Appendix D, and Appendix III is included as Appendix E. The RMP represents the mix of management actions that best provides for sustained multiple use management and environmental protection, while allowing reasonable levels of commodity use. The RMP was designed to avoid or minimize environmental harm where practicable, and applicable mitigation measures are included in the plan. Required monitoring standards and interventions were identified and established in the RMP as well.

All maps referred to in this section can be found on BLM Internet site at: <http://web.ead.anl.gov/rmpweb>. Updated maps for BLM resources can be found in a comparable section in Chapter 3.0.

#### **2.1.1 Air Quality**

##### ***Management Objectives***

To prevent the deterioration of air quality beyond applicable local, state, or federal standards and to enhance air resources where practicable.

To prevent impairment of important scenic values that may be caused by declining air quality.

### ***Management Actions***

No management actions were included in the original 1990 RMP.

## **2.1.2 Cultural Resources**

### ***Management Objectives***

To protect and preserve representative samples of the full array of cultural resources for the benefit of scientific and socio-cultural use by present and future generations.

To ensure that cultural resources are given full consideration in all land-use planning and management decisions.

To manage cultural resources so that scientific and socio-cultural values are not diminished, but rather are maintained and enhanced.

To ensure that BLM's undertakings avoid inadvertent damage to cultural resources both federal and nonfederal.

### ***Trails***

To stabilize and protect significant sites and segments along the Overland Trail, the Cherokee Trail, and the Rawlins-Fort Washakie Trail.

### ***National Natural Landmarks***

To maintain the integrity of existing and proposed>NNLs.

### ***Management Actions***

BLM will conduct Class I, II, or III inventories for actions involving BLM-administered public land and/or federal minerals that include surface disturbance as part of the action. BLM will also evaluate the significance of cultural resources identified during inventory in consultation with the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office to determine whether the resources are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

BLM will categorize cultural resources for management purposes (e.g., public use, scientific, socio-cultural).

The above actions will be carried out in accordance with law, policy, and guidance to meet the objectives for cultural resources management. Other actions pertaining to cultural resources are described under ACECs, Fire Management Decisions, and in Appendices C and D (Appendices I and II in the original RMP.)

*Trails*

BLM will seek listing on the National Register of Historic Places for eligible sites along the trails.

BLM will take appropriate actions (such as protective fencing of trail segments or stabilization of deteriorating buildings) to meet the objectives for significant trail segments.

Where appropriate, BLM will pursue opportunities to acquire legal access to trail segments.

*National Natural Landmarks*

Lands totaling 160 acres in the Gangplank proposed NNL, 640 acres in the Big Hollow NNL, and 160 acres in the Sand Creek NNL will be considered for disposal to individuals, organizations, agencies, or institutions that would manage these areas in accordance with their NNL status (See Map 6). Management actions pertaining to the Como Bluff NNL are described in the Como Bluff ACEC section.

**2.1.3 Fire***Management Objectives*

To concentrate fire suppression efforts in areas containing high resource and/or human values and in areas with intermingled landownership patterns, and to use prescribed fire to help meet the objectives of other programs (such as the reduction of fuels or the maintenance and/or improvement of wildlife habitat or range condition).

*Management Actions*

Portions of the planning area are designated for different levels of fire suppression.

**Full Suppression:** Approximately 60% of the planning area is designated a full suppression area. There are no equipment restrictions.

**Full Suppression With Management Options:** Approximately 3% of the planning area is designated a full fire suppression area “with management options.” Restrictions may be placed on the use of standard full suppression firefighting techniques.

**Limited Suppression:** Approximately 36% of the planning area is designated a limited fire suppression area.

**Limited Suppression With Consultation:** Approximately 1% of the planning area is proposed for a limited suppression classification following consultation and agreement with the landowners in the area. If agreement cannot be reached to allow limited suppression of wildfires, the area will be managed under a full suppression classification.

A fire management plan will be prepared containing criteria for protecting high resource values such as significant cultural resources, crucial winter range for big game, high priority watersheds, and high-value scenic areas. The fire management plan will include operational aspects of implementing limited suppression designations. An escaped fire analysis will be conducted to determine the appropriate course of action if fires cannot be contained within the first burning period or if they exceed the criteria established for limited suppression.

Prescribed burning will be used to achieve management objectives such as those for allotment management plans (AMP) and habitat management plans (HMP). Prescribed fire proposals will be considered case-by-case to ensure environmental integrity and consistency with multiple resource objectives and activity plans.

#### **2.1.4 Forestry**

##### ***Management Objectives***

To enhance health and productivity as well as diversity of the forestlands through forest management practices.

##### ***Management Actions***

The allowable harvest level is 20 million board feet (MMBF) per decade. This will be harvested from the commercial forestlands in the planning area that are available for intensive or restricted management of forest products (about 25,900 acres or 23% of the total forestland in the planning area). Following are the types of actions that will be taken to meet the forest management objectives on these lands.

About 19,200 acres will be intensively managed for forest products. These lands will be managed to achieve a highly productive forest by implementing activities that will enhance tree growth and health. Full consideration will be given to multiple-use values. Timber sales will be concentrated in these areas.

About 6,700 acres will be under restricted management for forest products. Included in this category are areas such as steep slopes and riparian areas with buffer zones around them.

Forest management practices such as timber harvesting, regeneration of disturbed sites, stand replacement and precommercial thinning will be carried out to meet the forest management objectives.

Stands of unmerchantable, nonproductive lodgepole pine will be replaced with young, vigorous trees.

Minor wood products such as fuelwood, posts and poles, Christmas trees, and wildings will be available on demand.

BLM will pursue opportunities to acquire or maintain legal access to certain areas of public land to support intensive management of commercial forestland (see the Lands Program - Access section for areas of access needs).

Consolidation of landownership on Elk Mountain and Shirley Mountain will be considered as opportunities arise.

About 85,200 acres of other forestlands will be managed only to enhance other uses. Aspen, juniper, and other noncommercial tree species are included in this category.

About 300 acres are not available for management of forest products because the timber is not harvestable and because of the small size of the stands, their scattered locations, or terrain limitations.

### **2.1.5 Health/Safety and Hazardous Materials (New Initiative, See Section 2.3)**

No management objectives and actions were identified in the 1990 RMP. New initiatives can be seen in Section 2.3 of this chapter.

### **2.1.6 Lands and Realty**

#### ***Management Objectives***

To support the goals and objectives of other resource programs for managing BLM-administered public lands and to respond to public demand Access for land use authorizations.

#### ***Management Actions***

##### *Utility/Transportation Systems*

All BLM-administered public lands will be open to consideration for placement of utility/transportation systems, but such systems will be located next to existing facilities whenever possible.

Areas with important resource values (identified on Map 8) will be avoided where possible in planning for new facility placement and routes. If it becomes necessary for facilities to be placed within avoidance areas, effects will be intensively mitigated.

##### *Communication Sites*

Communication site plans will be developed for all existing and any new sites (See Map 9). New sites may be established, with appropriate analysis, on a case-by-case basis.

Site categories will be established for all communication sites according to the following criteria:

High-power communication sites will be reserved for broadcast television and radio transmitters of 100 watts or more.

Low-power communication sites will be reserved for microwave, mobile telephone/radio, and other transmitters using fewer than 100 watts.

A 2-mile buffer will be maintained around all communication sites to ensure their integrity.

### *Landownership Adjustments*

About 66,000 (see Chapter 3 under the same heading for new number) acres are identified as available for consideration for disposal under the disposal criteria of FLPMA. These lands may be disposed by any appropriate means permitted under the land laws, including desert land patent, exchange, sale, and recreation and public purpose (R&PP) patent (specific tracks are identified on Maps 10, 11, 12, and 13). In addition, proposals for disposal of lands not identified as meeting the FLPMA criteria will be considered if they are consistent with the objectives of the RMP.

Before taking any disposal action, consideration will be given to each individual tract and will include public involvement.

The preferred method of disposal or acquisition of lands by BLM will be through exchange.

### *Withdrawals*

Reviews of withdrawn lands in the planning area, under section 204(1) of FLPMA, will be completed to determine whether existing withdrawals are serving or needed for their intended purposes. These reviews are not a part of developing the RMP. Thus, no decisions are made on the termination of any withdrawals in this RMP. The existing withdrawals in the planning area will remain in place unless or until it is determined they should be terminated and, if necessary, a plan amendment to the Great Divide RMP is made. Such determination or amendment will be based upon full examination of the issues associated with withdrawal terminations, including the land use, environmental and other factors associated with opening public lands now closed to entry under the public land laws or to mineral location under the mining laws.

BLM will initiate new withdrawals which would close areas to operation of the public land laws, including disposal, and to mineral location under the mining laws. This includes recreation sites, 650 acres; historic sites, 1,320 acres; and a rare plant population, 10 acres.

Further information on withdrawals is summarized in Table 2.1.6-1.

### *Classifications*

#### **Classification and Multiple Use Act (C&MU) of 1964**

A notice of classification, published in the Federal Register of November 8, 1967, classified 3,650,000 acres in the planning area for retention and multiple use

management. Of this, 3,916 acres of high value recreation lands were also segregated from mineral location. With the expiration of the C&MU Act and the passage of FLPMA, C&MU classifications for retention and multiple use were no longer necessary. Thus, except for the 3,916 acres segregated from mineral location, the C&MU classifications in the planning area were terminated.

Under the Great Divide RMP, these remaining 3,916 acres of C&MU classifications will be terminated and managed as follows:

For those high value recreation areas, where about 600 acres of the C&MU classifications are to be replaced with withdrawals (see Table 2.1.6-1), the classifications will remain in effect until after the new withdrawals are in place.

Withdrawals are not necessary to provide appropriate management for the remaining 3,316 acres. These lands will be managed under the general provisions of the RMP.

### **Other Classifications**

Classifications on 4,197 acres for potential recreation and public purpose (R&PP) uses under the R&PP Act of 1926 are no longer necessary and will be terminated.

Classifications on 15 acres for small tract sales are no longer necessary and will be terminated.

With the passage of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, all prior coal classifications protecting federal coal from mineral location on 671,768 acres are unnecessary and will be terminated.

### **2.1.7 Livestock Grazing**

Three separate grazing EISs cover the Great Divide RMP planning area. Two of these EISs (the Divide Grazing EIS and the Seven Lakes Grazing EIS) were completed prior to developing the Great Divide RMP. The livestock grazing management decisions for the Divide Grazing EIS area and the Seven Lakes Grazing EIS (Map 15) area will continue in effect as outlined in the Divide and Seven Lakes Rangeland Program Summaries (RPS). These two RPSs are incorporated into the Great Divide RMP by reference.

The RPS for the Medicine Bow Grazing EIS area (covered in the Great Divide RMP/EIS) will be developed in the near future. In conjunction with that RPS, a single set of priorities encompassing all three grazing EIS areas will be developed to coordinate the entire rangeland management program for the Great Divide planning area.

### ***Management Objectives (Pertaining to the Great Divide Area in General)***

To enhance livestock grazing while maintaining a balance between economic uses and the enhancement of wildlife habitat, watershed, and riparian areas, while maintaining range condition at, or improving range condition toward, the potential for the ecological site.

## ***Management Actions***

### ***Management Actions Specific to the Great Divide Area in General***

Livestock grazing use in the planning area will be continued. Livestock grazing will also be managed to provide for protection or enhancement of other resource values.

The total authorized livestock grazing use will not exceed the recognized active preference in the planning area. Currently, this is a maximum of 480,754 Animal Unit Months (AUM) of annual forage use (161,340 AUMs are in the Medicine Bow Grazing EIS area; 262,101 are in the Divide Grazing EIS area; and 57,313 in the Seven Lakes Grazing EIS area).

The current amounts, kinds and seasons of livestock grazing use will continue to be authorized until monitoring indicates a grazing use adjustment is necessary or that a class of livestock or season of use modification can be accommodated.

Requests for changes in seasons of use or kind of livestock will be considered case-by-case. Requests for conversions from sheep to cattle will be considered with management actions to maintain or improve riparian conditions.

Any adjustments in livestock grazing use will be consistent with current policies and procedures and as a result of inventories, monitoring studies and consultation, coordination or negotiation with grazing permittees. Adjustments may also result from land use planning decisions to change the allocation of land uses or from transfers of BLM-administered public lands to other agency jurisdictions or into nonfederal ownership.

The Great Divide rangeland monitoring plan will be reviewed and updated annually. This monitoring plan, which details the type and purpose of monitoring to be done at the allotment level is on file in the Great Divide Resource Area Office. The Wyoming minimum monitoring standards are shown in Table 2.1.7-1.

Grazing systems will be designed to achieve the livestock grazing objective. Existing allotment management plans (AMP) will be maintained and updated as necessary. New AMPs will be developed for selected grazing allotments as funding allows. "I" allotments have first priority.

Existing types and levels of grazing use will be continued in "M" allotments. Proposals to change existing use may require changes in the allotment categorization and level of management attention and monitoring. Maintenance and development of range improvements may be undertaken to enhance multiple-use values. Private investment will be encouraged and authorized when consistent with the multiple-use objectives for the allotment.

Grazing use in "C" allotments will continue at present levels. Proposals for changes in use will be reviewed and allowed if they do not conflict with other values. Private



investment in range improvements will be allowed when it does not conflict with multiple-use of the public land in the allotment.

#### *Management Actions Specific to the Medicine Bow Grazing EIS Area*

Livestock grazing will continue to be excluded from the Pennock Mountain Wildlife Habitat Area (6,285 acres), the Wick Wildlife Habitat Area (320 acres), the Laramie Peak Wildlife Habitat Area (2,858 acres), and the Sybille Wildlife Research Unit (680 acres). A grazing agreement has been negotiated in the Split Rock/Duck Creek Agreement Area (1760 acres) which accommodates the special needs of the bighorn sheep using the area for lambing.

A projected 1,725 acres of riparian habitat will be the object for development of grazing treatments. Special riparian needs will be the primary consideration in the location and design of range improvements and grazing systems in these areas. If necessary, livestock use will be excluded from riparian areas until they improve sufficiently to support limited seasonal grazing.

Special attention will be given to maintenance of wildlife habitat on 13,140 acres that contain crucial winter range for big game and other important habitat. These areas will also receive special attention in the development and implementation of AMPs and other activity plans (See maps 16, 17 and 18).

### **2.1.8 Minerals**

#### *Management Objectives*

##### *Leasable Minerals*

###### *Coal*

To provide for both short- and long-range development of federal coal in an orderly and timely manner, consistent with the policies of the federal coal management program, environmental integrity, national energy needs, and related demands; to protect important resources by specifying whether federal coal can be leased for surface, subsurface, or in situ mining methods; and to allow analysis of alternative areas in consideration of future leasing activities.

###### *Oil and Gas*

To provide opportunity for leasing, exploration, and development of oil and gas while protecting other resource values.

###### *Other Leasable Minerals*

To provide opportunity for leasing, exploration, and development of oil shale, geothermal resources, and nonenergy leasable minerals while protecting other resource values.

*Locatable Minerals*

To provide opportunity for location of mining claims and mineral development while prohibiting such activities on lands that are not compatible with these types of activities. (Note: Location of claims and exploration for minerals is not prohibited; a withdrawal from operations under the mining law is the option.)

*Salable Minerals*

To provide availability of mineral materials in convenient locations for users while protecting surface resources.

***Management Actions******Leasable Minerals****Coal*

The federal coal areas with potential for coal development are shown on Map 19. Those areas acceptable for further consideration for leasing (through lease applications or coal activity planning) are listed below. The mitigative measures developed in the coal screening process will be applied in these areas as described in Appendix D (originally Appendix II). All other federal coal areas within the planning area are unavailable for leasing consideration.

Federal coal areas acceptable for further leasing consideration—

**Hanna Basin:** About 29,280 acres of public land and 760 acres of split estate lands containing about 190.6 million tons of federal coal.

**North Indian Springs:** About 3,840 acres of public land containing about 25.0 million tons of federal coal (acceptable for leasing consideration only for in situ coal development).

**Indian Springs:** About 2,500 acres of public land containing about 25.0 million tons of federal coal (acceptable for leasing consideration only for in situ coal development).

**Red Rim:** About 9,720 acres of public land containing about 40.6 million tons of federal coal.

**China Butte:** About 6,240 acres of public land containing about 73.9 million tons of federal coal.

**Atlantic Rim:** About 2,850 acres of public land and 800 acres of split estate lands containing about 79.1 million tons of federal coal.

**Development Sequence:**

A north-to-south coal development sequence will be followed in the entire area west of Rawlins and south of I-80 as needs are identified.

BLM will process all applications for leasing in areas identified as acceptable for further consideration for coal leasing. For each application, BLM will conduct a site-specific environmental analysis and will consider the development sequence described above and other environmental and socioeconomic factors (see Appendix D).

Savery Preference Right (coal) Lease Applications (PRLA)-Serial Numbers WYW-0324034, 35, 36, 38, 41, 42.

Development of the federal coal in the Savery PRLA area will not be allowed and no further consideration will be given to federal coal leasing in the area.

While the Great Divide proposed RMP/Final EIS was being printed (August 1988), the final showing for the Savery PRLAs, submitted by the applicant, was determined by BLM to be inadequate and the applications were rejected. Lacking any contest of this action by the applicant, the Savery PRLA case files (the only PRLAs in the Great Divide planning area) were closed. Thus, there is no longer any potential for PRLAs to influence the above decided north-to-south coal development sequence in the planning area.

In considering the Savery PRLA area for inclusion in the competitive federal coal leasing process, it was determined that the federal coal in the area has no development potential. The reasons for lacking development potential are the same as those explained in Appendix D (i.e., under the Coal Planning Process, Step 1: Identification of Development Potential Coal). In addition, the Record of Decision for the Savery Coal EIS (BLM, 1985) adopted the no (coal) development alternative for the Savery PRLA area because the significant resource impacts and land use conflicts that would result could not be acceptably mitigated. That situation has not changed and the no development decision is still appropriate for the foreseeable future.

*Oil and Gas*

The entire planning area is open to oil and gas leasing. Leases will be issued with needed restrictions to protect the resources listed in Table 2.1.8-1.

Surface-disturbing activities will be restricted and intensively managed to maintain important resource values in the ACECs, the Baggs Elk Crucial Winter Range, and in overlapping crucial winter ranges for the various big game species. (See the individual ACEC and wildlife sections.)

All lands that are open to oil and gas leasing are also open to geophysical exploration.

In cases where federal oil and gas leases are or have been issued (1) without stipulated restrictions or requirements that are later found to be necessary; or (2) with stipulated restrictions or requirements that are later found to be insufficient; the needed restrictions or requirements may be included in approving subsequent exploration and development

activities. These restrictions or requirements may only be included as reasonable measures or as conditions of approval (COA) in authorizing applications for permit to drill (APD), sundry notices, or plans of development (POD).

Conversely, in cases where leases are or have been issued with stipulated restrictions or requirements that are later found to be excessive or unnecessary, the stipulated restrictions or requirements may be appropriately modified, excepted or waived in authorizing APDs, sundry notices, or PODs.

**NOTE:** Both the application of reasonable measures or COAs and the modification, exception or waiver of stipulated restrictions or requirements must first be based upon site-specific analysis of individual APDs, sundry notices, or PODs, including the necessary supporting NEPA documentation.

### ***Other Leasable Minerals***

The entire planning area is open to leasing of oil shale, geothermal resources, and nonenergy leasable minerals.

Lease applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Stipulations to protect important surface values will be based on interdisciplinary review of individual proposals and environmental analysis.

### ***Locatable Minerals***

The entire planning area is open to location of mining claims and mineral development except for areas that are closed or to be closed and withdrawn from mineral location. These areas are shown in Table 2.1.6-1.

All locatable minerals actions will be reviewed to assure compliance with BLM bonding policy for surface-disturbing activities.

### ***Salable Minerals***

The planning area is open to the sale of mineral materials.

Sales will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Stipulations to protect important resource values will be based on interdisciplinary review and analysis of individual proposals.

### ***Geophysical Exploration (New Initiative, See Section 2.3)***

Geophysical Exploration objectives and management actions were not addressed in the 1990 RMP (see Section 2.3).

*Geological Hazards (New Initiative, See Section 2.3)*

Geological Hazards objectives and management actions were not addressed in the 1990 RMP (see Section 2.3).

**2.1.9 Off-Highway Vehicle Use*****Management Objectives***

See General Objective for Recreation Management Objectives in this section.

***Management Actions***

An ORV implementation plan will be prepared for the resource area. More details on off-road vehicular use and management will be developed in this implementation plan.

BLM will coordinate and cooperate with owners of adjacent properties, interested individuals, organizations, and agencies in preparing plans for implementation of the following ORV designations (also see Map 23).

***General Planning Area***

With some exceptions, the planning area is open to use of motorized over-the-snow vehicles, provided that they do not adversely affect wildlife or vegetation. With some exceptions, all other motorized vehicle use in the planning area is limited to existing roads and trails. These exceptions are—

**Pennock Mountain and Wick Wildlife Habitat Areas** (crucial elk winter range: about 10,126 acres). These areas are closed to motorized vehicle use, including over-the-snow vehicles, from November 15 to April 30.

**Encampment Canyon crucial big horn winter range** (about 6,700 acres). This area is closed to motorized vehicle use, including over-the-snow vehicles, from December 1 to April 30.

**Encampment River Trail**. Those portions of this trail that cross BLM-administered public lands are closed to all types of motorized vehicle use, year-round.

**Dune Ponds Cooperative Management Area** (3,240 acres). Motorized vehicle use is limited to open sand areas west of Carbon County Road 351 and to existing roads and trails in the rest of the area.

**West Seminoe Area** (99,162 acres). Motorized vehicle use will be limited to designated roads and trails to help resolve resource conflicts and preserve public access.

**Ferris Mountains**. This area is closed to all types of motorized vehicle use, year-round (see Adobe Town/Ferris Mountains Wilderness Final EIS).

**Adobe Town.** Motorized vehicle use will be limited to designated roads and trails (see Adobe Town/Ferris Mountains Wilderness Final EIS).

**Shirley Mountain.** Motorized vehicle use will be limited to designated roads and trails to help resolve resource conflicts and preserve public access (see Shirley Mountain Planning Review Travel Management Strategy).

### *Specific Problem Areas*

Plans for rehabilitation or mitigation of ORV use will be developed and implemented for specific problem areas within the Sand Hills area and the Dune Ponds Cooperative Management Area.

Because of the mixed landownership pattern and multiple resource concerns, completion of an effective ORV implementation plan for the Dune Ponds area is entirely dependent on close coordination with private land owners of adjacent property, the Wyoming State Land Board, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, and other interested parties. The plan will also be closely coordinated with the wildlife, soils, and livestock grazing programs to ensure multiple resource concerns are addressed.

### *Consolidation of Landownership*

Consolidation of landownership will be pursued in the following areas to increase recreational opportunities for the public. The areas in order of priority are: High - Bennett Peak, Dugway, Miracle Mile, North Platte River area; moderate - Dune Ponds, Elk Mountain, Shirley Mountains caves; and low - Bennett Mountains, Encampment River Canyon, Ferris Mountains. The preferred method of consolidation is through exchange.

## **2.1.10 Paleontology**

### ***Management Objectives***

To maintain the integrity of the scientific value of paleontological resources.

### ***Management Actions***

Inventories will be conducted on a case-by-case basis for each proposed surface-disturbing activity to ensure maintenance or integrity of paleontological values.

Other actions pertaining to paleontological resources are described in Appendix D and the Como Bluff ACEC section.

### **2.1.11 Recreation Resources**

#### ***Management Objectives***

To ensure the continued availability of outdoor recreational opportunities, to meet legal requirements for the health and safety of visitors and to mitigate conflicts with other resource uses.

#### ***Management Actions***

##### ***Recreation Areas and Sites***

###### ***Existing Sites***

Maintenance of existing developed and undeveloped recreation sites will be continued.

Existing activity plans for the Nine Mile Hill and Big Creek sites will be revised before implementation.

###### ***New Sites***

Priority for development of new recreation sites will be as follows: (1) a boat launch and a picnic area at Prospect Creek, (2) a recreation site at Jelm Mountain, and (3) a recreation site in the Shirley Mountains. (See Map 20). Additional sites will be considered for development in the future as opportunities arise.

###### ***Special Recreation Management Areas***

The designated special recreation management areas (SRMA) are shown on Map 21. These areas will be managed as follows—

###### ***Continental Divide National Scenic Trail SRMA***

This SRMA covers 80 miles of trail through BLM-administered public land. The area will be managed to provide opportunities for trail users to view the diverse topographic, geologic, vegetative, and scenic phenomena and wildlife that characterize the Continental Divide and to observe examples of human use of the natural resources.

The exact trail route will be identified through activity planning, which also will determine where easements or rights-of-way will be needed on private or state-owned land.

###### ***North Platte River SRMA***

This 3,550-acre SRMA will be managed to provide high-quality recreational opportunities, especially for boating, fishing, camping, and sightseeing.

Management also will be aimed at providing public facilities and continued access.

Surface-disturbing activities within 1/4 mile on either side of the river will be restricted to maintain the quality of the visual resources. An activity plan has been written for a portion of this area. That plan will be revised to include the entire SRMA.

### ***Shirley Mountains Caves SRMA***

This 24,800-acre SRMA will be managed to provide for protection and enjoyment of the cave system while other resource uses will be allowed aboveground (See Map 22). Specific recreation management guidelines and surface use guidelines will be developed during activity planning.

### ***Access to Recreation Areas***

Consistent with the Wyoming BLM access policy, BLM will pursue opportunities to acquire legal access to certain areas to ensure continued availability of outdoor recreational opportunities. See Lands Program - Access section for the areas needing access.

### ***Consolidation of Landownership***

Consolidation of landownership will be pursued in the following areas to increase recreational opportunities for the public. The areas in order of priority are: High - Bennett Peak, Dugway, Miracle Mile, North Platte River area; moderate - Dune Ponds, Elk Mountain, Shirley Mountains caves; and low - Bennett Mountains, Encampment River Canyon, Ferris Mountains. The preferred method of consolidation is through exchange.

#### **2.1.12 Socioeconomic**

No management objectives and actions were identified in the 1990 RMP as the RFO does not manage socioeconomics.

#### **2.1.13 Soils and Watershed**

##### ***Management Objectives***

To maintain soil cover and productivity where they are adequate and to increase soil cover and productivity where they are in a downward trend.

To maintain or improve soil stability, within the potential of the ecological site, to insure adequate water infiltration, optimal plant growth, and minimal surface runoff.

To control flood and sediment damage from natural or human-induced causes.

To reduce salt loading in watersheds that lie within the Colorado River Basin.

##### ***Management Actions***

BLM will implement intensive land-use practices to mitigate salt and sediment loading caused by surface-disturbing activities. These practices will be carried out in the



following areas in priority order: (1) Muddy Creek, (2) Sage Creek, (3) Second and Third Sand Creeks, and (4) the Little Snake River Basin (excluding the Muddy Creek watershed). Watershed or other activity plans will address site-specific problems and will include monitoring for salt, and sediment loading.

In other areas, BLM will carry out watershed management practices designed to meet soils, water, and air resource management objectives. These practices will be included in activity plans such as AMPs and HMPs.

Surface-disturbing activities will be prohibited on unstable areas unless it can be demonstrated that the instability can be alleviated. Specific unstable areas such as landslides, slumps, and areas exhibiting soil creep will be identified individually.

#### **2.1.14 Transportation and Access**

**This section corresponds to the Access Section of the 1990 RPM.**

##### *Access*

Consistent with the Wyoming BLM access policy, BLM will pursue opportunities to acquire or maintain legal access to the following areas—

##### **High Importance**

- Arlington (forestry)
- Atlantic Rim (recreation)
- Big Creek (recreation)
- Elk Mountain (forestry)
- Ferris Mountains (recreation)
- Little Medicine (forestry)
- Miller Hill (recreation)
- Shirley Mountain (forestry, recreation)

##### **Moderate Importance**

- North Laramie River (forestry)
- Pine Mountain-Split Rock (forestry)
- Rawlins Uplift (recreation)
- Seminole-Pathfinder (recreation)
- Toltec (forestry)
- White Rock Canyon (forestry)

##### **Low Importance**

- Seven Mile (forestry)
- Sugarloaf (forestry)
- Woodedged (forestry)
- Continental Divide Trail (recreation)

See Map 16 for access needs. Additional access needs will be considered as they are identified or as opportunities arise.

### **2.1.15 Vegetation**

#### ***Management Objectives***

##### *Noxious Weeds and Nonnative Invasive Species*

Noxious weeds and nonnative invasive species were not addressed in the 1990 RMP (see Section 2.3 for new initiatives).

##### *Sensitive Plants*

To maintain or enhance the population of Gibben's beardtongue (*Penstemon gibbensii*) in the site area.

To maintain or enhance the population of the Muddy Gap Cushion Plant Community.

To maintain or enhance the population of persistent sepal yellowcress (*Rorippa calycina*).

#### ***Management Actions***

##### *Noxious Weeds and Non-Native Invasive Species*

Noxious weeds and non-invasive species were not addressed in the 1990 RMP (see section 2.3 for new initiatives in this).

##### *Sensitive Plants*

#### **Gibben's Beardtongue Site (*Penstemon gibbensii*)**

The known population of Gibben's beardtongue will be protected from disturbance by maintaining the fencing around the population and by intensively managing surface-disturbing activities in adjacent areas that could affect the population. Case-by-case examination of any proposed surface-disturbing activity will be made to determine potential adverse effects and appropriate mitigation to minimize those effects.

Developments, uses and facilities will be managed temporally and spatially to avoid damage to the sensitive plant species. (Note: Additional populations of Gibben's Beardtongue have been found since the RMP was written. At this time no additional management has been applied to these populations other than disturbance avoidance.)

Established trend studies will be continued.

BLM intends to close this area to mineral location. A withdrawal will be initiated to implement this closure.

**Muddy Gap Cushion Plant Community (about 100 acres)**

Notices will be required for locatable mineral exploration and development (except casual use) consistent with regulations. A plan of operations will be required for disturbance of more than 5 acres.

BLM will coordinate management of the plant community with The Nature Conservancy. If a need for protective measures is indicated, they will be taken to protect the plant community.

**Persistent Sepal Yellowcress (*Rorippa Calycina*)**

The planning area contains fifteen known populations of the persistent sepal yellowcress (*Rorippa calycina*) plant which has been proposed for threatened or endangered status. Some of this is on land administered by the Bureau of Reclamation (BuRec); therefore, BLM will coordinate with BuRec to manage populations of persistent sepal yellowcress. In addition, BLM will coordinate with county weed and pest control districts to ensure that populations of the plant are not affected by weed control programs. Since locations and degree of occurrence of this plant are extremely unstable, no acreage estimates have been attempted. Occurrence fluctuates with high and low reservoir or stream water lines.

**2.1.16 Visual Resources*****Management Objectives***

To minimize adverse effects on visual resources while maintaining the effectiveness of land-use allocations.

***Management Actions***

The planning area will be managed according to visual resource management (VRM) classes as follows: Class I, 33,165 acres; Class II, 160,640 acres; Class III, 3,582,195 acres; Class IV, 224,000 acres (See Map 24).

**2.1.17 Water Quality and Riparian Areas*****Management Objective***

To maintain riparian areas in good or excellent condition and to improve riparian areas that are in fair or poor condition.

To meet or exceed established standards for quality of surface water and groundwater where water quality has been lowered by human-induced causes.

To provide for physical and legal availability of water for use by the public and by federal, state, and local agencies for fisheries and wildlife and for livestock, recreational, municipal, and industrial uses.

***Management Actions***

There are no management actions that correspond to this section in the RMP.

**2.1.18 Wild Horses*****Management Objectives***

To protect, maintain, and control a viable, healthy herd of wild horses while retaining their free-roaming nature and to provide adequate habitat for free-roaming wild horses through management consistent with environmental protection and enhancement policies.

***Management Actions***

There are three wild horse herd management areas (WHHMA) within the resource area. They are the Adobe Town WHHMA, the Flat Top WHHMA, and the Seven Lakes WHHMA (See Map 25). Each of these areas is covered by a herd management area plan (HMAP). Current management levels for these areas are Adobe Town, 300-500; Flat Top, 40-100; and Seven Lakes, 66-135. Monitoring in these areas is ongoing. Herd management levels for each area will be evaluated to determine whether they are at appropriate management levels as soon as sufficient monitoring data are available. At that time, the HMAPs will be revised if necessary.

**2.1.19 Wildlife and Fisheries**

The 29 standard habitat types in the Great Divide Resource Area have been ranked by management priority into three categories (see table 2.1.7-1). High priority habitat types, which usually support a large number of wildlife species, are not common in the planning area. Sound management is required to ensure maintenance or improvement of the vegetative composition and structure of moderate priority habitat types, which usually are of lesser importance to wildlife but are in greater supply than high priority types. In low priority habitat types, there is less vegetative diversity. Because of their abundance and lower wildlife value, these types can be more heavily used by conflicting resources without significant wildlife impacts.

***Management Objectives - General***

To provide habitat quality (food, cover, space, and water) adequate to support a natural diversity of wildlife and fisheries, including big game, upland game, waterfowl, non-game species, game fish, sensitive, threatened, and endangered species, species of special management interest in Wyoming, as well as to assist in meeting goals of recovery plans.

To maintain or improve vegetation condition and/or avoid long-term disturbance in high priority standard habitat sites and fisheries areas.

To maintain or improve overall ecological quality, thus providing good wildlife habitat, within the constraints of multiple-use management in moderate and low priority standard habitat sites (see Table 2.1.18-1).

## **Management Objectives**

### *Raptor Concentration Areas*

To manage resources so that productivity of nesting raptor pairs is maintained, while allowing for development of coal and oil and gas, and to seek the cooperation of owners of adjacent property in management of raptor nesting habitat.

### *Winter Range for all Wildlife*

The objectives for the Baggs Crucial Elk Winter Range are to maintain the integrity of crucial winter habitat for elk, to allow development of oil and gas and coal, and to seek the cooperation of owners of adjacent property in management of the habitat.

### *White Pelican Island*

To maintain and enhance nesting habitat for a colony of white pelicans on the 12-acre island. (Note: This was an invalid decision in the RMP. Pelican Island is under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Reclamation. Therefore, the White Pelican Island will not be addressed further in subsequent chapters of this MSA.)

## **Management Actions**

### *Habitat Management Areas*

There will be 16 habitat management areas—

**Six existing HMP areas:** Baggs, Encampment/Bighorn Sheep, Ferris/Seminole, Red Desert, Sage Creek, and Shirley Mountains.

**Five new HMP areas** (of which one will be an addition to an existing area): Jelm Mountain, Laramie Peak, Sage Creek (addition), Saratoga Valley, and South Desert.

**Five existing cooperative management agreement areas:** Laramie Peak, Pennock Mountain, Wick, and Chain Lakes Wildlife Habitat Areas and the Sybille Wildlife Research Unit.

**One new cooperative management agreement area:** Dune Ponds (See ORV Management under Recreation Management Decisions).

Site-specific management actions will be implemented in HMP areas and cooperative management areas to improve wildlife habitat. These site-specific management actions will be identified in existing, revised, or proposed Habitat Management Plans (HMP). These HMPs will also address transplants or augmentations of endemic wildlife species.

Wildlife and wildlife habitat inventory and monitoring will be implemented in all HMP areas, cooperative management areas and other portions of the planning area.

These inventories and monitoring studies will conform to Bureau policy and standards.

The estimated acres that will be involved in management actions in HMP areas are: 60 miles of streams (fisheries); 545 acres of reservoirs; 271,000 acres of raptor habitat; 243,000 acres of high priority habitat (including wetlands and riparian zone); and crucial winter range for big game species as follows: antelope, 375,000 acres; bighorn sheep, 23,000 acres; deer, 288,000 acres; elk, 153,000 acres.

#### *Raptor Concentration Areas*

Surface-disturbing activities will be intensively managed in all RCAs to reduce physical disturbance of raptor habitat and disturbance of the birds. This will entail case-by-case examination of proposals to determine potential adverse effects and appropriate mitigation to minimize those effects. Certain times of the year and certain areas will be avoided by spatial and temporal management of development, facilities, and uses.

Oil and gas leasing will be allowed in the RCAs. Coal leasing will be allowed in those portions of RCAs found to be acceptable for further leasing consideration.

Most of the Atlantic Rim RCA is included in the Jep Canyon ACEC and the Shamrock Hills RCA is designated an ACEC. Refer to the ACEC section for discussion of management guidelines for these two RCAs.

In the remaining RCAs, a notice will be required for locatable mineral exploration and development (except casual use) for disturbances of five acres or less; a plan of operations will be required for disturbances of more than five acres.

#### *Baggs Crucial Elk Winter Range*

Surface-disturbing activities will be intensively managed to prevent loss of significant elk winter habitat. This will entail case-by-case examination of proposals to determine potential adverse effects and appropriate mitigation to minimize those effects. Certain times of the year and certain areas will be avoided by spatial and temporal management of development, facilities, and uses.

Oil and gas leasing will be allowed with application of surface protection measures as described above.

Plans of operations or notices will be required for locatable mineral exploration and development (except casual use) consistent with regulations. A plan of operations will be required for disturbances of more than 5 acres.

BLM will cooperate with owners of intermingled or adjacent property to manage the habitat, coordinate efforts with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD), and recommend managing elk population objective levels at a number supportable by the habitat. (Note: These requirements also apply to other crucial winter ranges throughout the RMPPA)

*White Pelican Island*

BLM will develop a cooperative agreement with the WGFD and BuRec for management of the pelican habitat on the island. Management actions will be carried out with the concurrence of BuRec.

The white pelican population will be monitored for disturbance and habitat change.

(Note: These were invalid decisions in the RMP. Pelican Island is under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Reclamation. Therefore, the White Pelican Island will not be addressed further in subsequent chapters of this MSA.)

*Other Areas Important to Wildlife*

Application of the Wyoming BLM Standard Mitigation Guidelines for Surface-disturbing Activities will be used to protect many types of areas of importance to wildlife. In addition, other special management practices will be used as appropriate to focus management emphasis on important resources or to minimize potential conflicts.

When considering needs for protective measures, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) will be consulted concerning proposals involving surface disturbance and other disruptive activities in these important habitats. BLM will also coordinate and cooperate with intermingled and adjacent landowners in managing these habitats.

Crucial winter ranges for all big game species will be protected. Surface disturbance will be mitigated to restore or replace habitat. In addition, previously depleted habitat in crucial big game winter ranges will be reclaimed to the extent possible.

In areas where crucial winter ranges for more than one species of big game overlap (approximately 122,880 acres of BLM-administered public land), habitat quality will be maintained (See Map 27). Previously depleted habitat in these areas will be reclaimed to the extent possible. In addition, BLM will employ spatial and temporal management of development, facilities, and users to avoid activity in sensitive areas or during sensitive times of the year.

Greater sage-grouse and sharp-tailed grouse strutting/dancing grounds and nesting habitat will be protected.

BLM will consider consolidating public land to obtain important wildlife habitat areas such as (a) perennial streams, lakes and wetlands (USFWS also has identified this as a priority); (b) raptor concentration areas; (c) crucial winter range for bighorn sheep, elk, mule deer, or antelope; and (d) other high priority habitats.

*Other*

In addition to the actions outlined above, some management actions that will benefit wildlife are included in the discussions on management of ACECs, fire, forests, livestock grazing, coal, oil and gas, locatable minerals, and recreation.

As proposals are submitted, animal damage control (ADC) activities in the planning area, including the use of poisons that are lethal to vertebrate animals, will be considered. These activities are subject to established ADC procedures and policies, including NEPA requirements, as outlined in the national and state level memoranda of understanding between BLM and USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), BLM manual 6830, and other directives. These activities are also subject to the Rawlins BLM District ADC Management Plan which is maintained current and consistent with those procedures and policies.

**2.1.20 Special Management Areas***Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*

These decisions apply only to BLM-administered public lands within the boundaries of the ACECs.

The general management direction for each designated ACEC is described in this section. The only management actions presented here are for the specific resource management programs that directly pertain to the issues for each ACEC. Management actions for other programs in the ACECs will be guided by the general RMP decisions found in the other sections of the RMP. Management actions for ACECs include appropriate application of “The Wyoming BLM Standard Mitigation Guideline for Surface-disturbing Activities (Appendix C)” (originally Appendix I) and resource program-specific guidelines.

More specific and detailed management prescriptions and monitoring requirements will be identified when activity plans are prepared for each ACEC.

**Como Bluff**

The Como Bluff area (1,760 acres of public land) is designated an ACEC (See Map 2).

*Management Objectives*

The objectives for management of the Como Bluff ACEC are to manage it in a manner that will maintain the integrity of the Como Bluff National Register District/National Natural Landmark, to preserve historically significant sites, and to allow for mineral development. The National Natural Landmark (NNL) will be managed for its paleontological resource and historical values.



***Management Action***

An activity plan will be prepared to provide detailed guidance for management of the Como Bluff ACEC.

***Cultural and Paleontological Resource Management***

Within 1/4 mile of exposures of the Morrison Formation (a fossil-bearing formation), surface-disturbing activities will be intensively managed. Case-by-case examination of any proposed surface-disturbing activity will be made to determine potential adverse effects and appropriate mitigation to minimize those effects.

***Minerals Management***

Oil and gas leasing will be allowed with intensive management of surface-disturbing activities.

Plans of operations will be required for locatable mineral exploration and development (except casual use), regardless of the number of acres that may be disturbed.

**Sand Hills**

The Sand Hills area (about 8,300 acres of public land) is designated an ACEC (See Map 3).

***Management Objectives***

The objectives for management of the Sand Hills ACEC are to protect the unique vegetation complex, maintain wildlife habitat values, minimize soil erosion, and promote recreational opportunities.

***Management Action***

An activity plan will be prepared to provide detailed guidance for management of the Sand Hills ACEC.

***Fire Management***

The ACEC is designated a full fire suppression area with management options (i.e., restrictions may be placed on the use of standard full suppression firefighting techniques).

***Minerals Management***

Oil and gas leasing will be allowed with intensive management of surface-disturbing activities.

Plans of operations will be required for locatable mineral exploration and development (except casual use), regardless of the number of acres that may be disturbed.

*Off-Road Vehicle Management*

Motor vehicle use will be limited to existing roads and trails. Rehabilitation and mitigation practices will be carried out in specific problem areas.

*Vegetation/Soils Management*

The unique vegetation complex of the Sand Hills area will be protected from sources of disturbance through intensive management of surface-disturbing activities. Case-by-case examination of any proposed surface-disturbing activity will be made to determine potential adverse effects and appropriate mitigation to minimize those effects.

Developments, uses, and facilities will be managed temporally (time of year) and spatially (space or distance) to avoid damage to the vegetation.

*Wildlife Habitat Management*

Inventories will be conducted to identify the location of existing roads and trails, areas that mule deer avoid because of human activities, and areas where soil disturbance and wind erosion are concentrated.

Action plans will be developed to mitigate the effects in identified mule deer behavioral avoidance zones and to rehabilitate concentrated soil disturbance and wind erosion.

**Jep Canyon**

The Jep Canyon area (about 13,320 acres of public land) is designated an ACEC (See Map 4).

*Management Objectives*

The objectives for management of the Jep Canyon ACEC are to maintain the integrity of crucial winter habitat for elk, to maintain the productivity of nesting raptor pairs, to allow for development of oil and gas and coal, and to seek the cooperation of owners of adjacent property in management of the habitat.

*Management Action*

An activity plan will be prepared to provide detailed guidance for management of the Jep Canyon ACEC

*Minerals Management*

Oil and gas leasing will be allowed with intensive management of surface-disturbing activities.

Plans of operations will be required for locatable mineral exploration and development (except casual use), regardless of the number of acres that would be disturbed.

Coal development will be permitted in the Jep Canyon ACEC with application of mitigation and protection requirements developed during the coal screening process (see Appendix D, Atlantic Rim).

#### *Vegetation/Soils Management*

Surface-disturbing activities will be intensively managed to prevent loss of significant habitat. This will entail case-by-case examination of proposals to determine potential adverse effects and appropriate mitigation to minimize those effects. Certain times of the year and certain areas will be avoided by spatial and temporal management of development, facilities, and .

### **Shamrock Hills Raptor Concentration Areas**

The Shamrock Hills Raptor Concentration Area (RCA) (about 17,280 acres of public land) is designated an ACEC (See Map 5).

#### *Management Objectives*

The objectives for management of this area are to maintain the productivity of nesting raptor pairs, to allow for development of coal and oil and gas, and to seek the cooperation of owners of adjacent property in management of raptor nesting habitat.

#### *Management Action*

An activity plan will be prepared to provide detailed guidance for management of the Shamrock Hills ACEC.

#### *Vegetation/Soils Management*

Surface-disturbing activities will be intensively managed to maintain raptor nesting habitat. This will entail case-by-case examination of proposals to determine potential adverse effects and appropriate mitigation to minimize those effects. Developments, uses, and facilities will be managed temporally and spatially to avoid certain times of the year and certain areas.

#### *Minerals Management*

Oil and gas leasing will be allowed with intensive management of surface-disturbing activities.

Plans of operations will be required for locatable mineral exploration and development (except casual use), regardless of the number of acres in the ACEC that would be disturbed.

Coal development will be permitted in the Shamrock Hills ACEC with application of mitigation and protection requirements developed during the coal screening process (see Appendix D, Indian Springs and North Indian Springs).

### *Seminoe Raptor Concentration Area*

The Seminoe Raptor Concentration Area (RCA) was originally proposed for ACEC designation because of its historically high concentrations of nesting ferruginous hawks. Review of nesting activity in the Seminoe RCA from 1987 to 1990 determined that only one or two pairs of ferruginous hawks utilized the area for nesting habitat. The decline in ferruginous hawk use is believed to have occurred since the late 1970s following the decline of both prairie dogs and Richardson's ground squirrels inhabiting the area. Ferruginous hawk nests originally located in the 1970s and early 1980s are generally in poor condition. Many of the nests are merely stick remnants now.

For these reasons the Seminoe RCA will not be designated an ACEC. However, the area will continue to be monitored. In the event that populations of hawks and prey rebound in the future, management direction in the area will be reconsidered.

## **2.2 AMENDMENTS AND MAINTENANCE EDITS**

Section 2.2 contains the maintenance edits and amendments that have been made to the Approved Rawlins RMP since its approval in 1990. These maintenance edits and amendments can be found on BLM's Internet site at <http://web.ead.anl.gov/rmpweb> and are summarized below. For this document, Appendices II of the original 1990 RMP has been revised and the revised version is included as Appendix F (Coal). All appendices are included in the Appendices volume of this document. Maps referred to in this section can be found on BLM Web site. Maps are not included in this document, as resource-specific maps have been updated, and are included in the Tables, Maps and Figures document.

Following the summary of amendments and maintenance edits is a comprehensive list of laws and regulations that have been established since the RMP was approved in 1990. These laws and regulations contain decisions that affect the management of public lands and resources in the Rawlins Field Office (RFO).

On January 26, 1998, the Introduction section of the Approved RMP was changed to include the following statement:

*Wyoming Standards and Guidelines (S&G).* This plan incorporates the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the State of Wyoming*, approved August 12, 1997 (Appendix E).

*Standards and Guidelines* were developed in compliance with the Department of the Interior's final rule for grazing administration, effective August 21, 1995. The development and application of these standards and guidelines are to achieve the four fundamentals of rangeland health outlined in the grazing regulations at 43 CFR 4180.1.

*Wyoming Instruction Memorandum 97-111*, dated September 26, 1997, indicates that the Standards and Guidelines will be incorporated in all Wyoming RMPs through plan maintenance.

### **2.2.1 Air Quality**

There are no maintenance edits for this section.

### **2.2.2 Cultural Resources**

On July 6, 1998, the management objectives for cultural resources were changed to include the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands*, described in Appendix E.

The reference to Appendix E, Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the State of Wyoming, concerns only the Standards for Healthy Rangelands in this RMP section. The *Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Wyoming* (S&G) were approved by the Secretary of the Interior on August 12, 1997. The development and application of the S&Gs are to achieve the four fundamentals of rangeland health outlined in the grazing regulations (43 CFR 4180.1).

The S&Gs are incorporated as part of the appendix materials (Appendix E) for this RMP. Additional wording, clarification of existing text, and appropriate reference to the appendix have been added to the RMP. This action does not change any decisions in the RMP, and the RMP is in conformance with the S&Gs.

### **2.2.3 Fire**

On July 6, 1998, the fire management objectives were changed to include the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands* for the same reasons stated in the Cultural Resources section above. Aside from adding the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands*, a flowchart was added to Fire Management Actions on September 14, 1999. Also the 2000 National Fire Plan (NFP) further amended the RMP.

The flowchart shows the sequence of events that should be followed in managing wildland and prescribed fires. BLM Office of Fire and Aviation I.B. No. 97-2075, dated August 19, 1997, provided a flowchart that provides the sequence of events that should be followed in the management of wildland fire. Figure 2.2.3-1 shows this flowchart, along with an explanation of the flowchart.

### **2.2.4 Forestry**

On July 6, 1998, the forest management objectives were changed to include the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands*.

### **2.2.5 Health/Safety and Hazardous Materials**

There are no maintenance edits for this section.

### 2.2.6 Lands and Realty

On July 6, 1998, the Lands and Realty management objectives were changed to include the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands*.

#### *Landownership Adjustments*

On February 18, 2000, the following two edits were made to the Landownership Adjustments portion of the Lands and Realty section of the Approved RMP. The first edit deletes specific parcels considered for withdrawal from Map 11 in the Approved RMP. New Map 11a deletes certain parcels from the RMP as lands that may be considered for disposal. Lands on Map 11 met initial FLPMA disposal criteria during formulation of the RMP. The lands removed from Map 11 are identified below. These lands are situated along the recently designated Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) (Decision Record for Designation of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, EA# WY-050-EA9-008, January 25, 1999) and may become part of future CDNST implementation plans.

Map 11 lands removed from Map 11a:

T. 21 N., R. 87 W.

Section 4, N $\frac{1}{2}$

Section 8, NW $\frac{1}{4}$

Section 30, W $\frac{1}{2}$ W $\frac{1}{2}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$

The second edit to this section was made on July 21, 2000, to clarify language in the Rawlins Field Office Land Exchange Criteria approved by the Rawlins Field Manager on June 23, 2000 (*Instruction Memorandum No. WY-030-2000-007*). The new text is as follows:

These lands are lands that were identified during the planning effort Divide Resource Management Plan as having met the FLPMA disposal criteria. The inventory of public lands that meet the FLPMA disposal criteria is not completed for the entire RMP planning area. No RMP decision has been made to the effect that any of these lands will be disposed of or that these lands are the only public lands in the planning area that may be considered for disposal.

### 2.2.7 Livestock Grazing

The following edit applies to the Management Objectives portion of the Livestock Grazing section of the RMP. The *Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Wyoming* (S&G) were approved by the Secretary of the Interior August 12, 1997. The development and application of the S&Gs are to achieve the four fundamentals of rangeland health outlined in the grazing regulations (43 CFR 4180.1). The following insert added language specific to Standards #1 and #3:

The S&Gs are incorporated as part of the appendix materials (Appendix E) for this Resource Management Plan. Additional wording, clarification of existing text, and appropriate reference to the appendix have been added to the RMP. The definition of

“ecological site” is found in the Definitions section of Appendix E. This action does not change any decisions in the RMP, and the RMP is in conformance with the S&Gs.

This section of the document originally read:

To enhance livestock grazing while maintaining a balance between economic uses and the enhancement of wildlife habitat, watershed, and riparian areas, and while maintaining or improving range condition over the long term.

On January 26, 1998, the text was changed as follows:

To enhance livestock grazing while maintaining a balance between economic uses and the enhancement of wildlife habitat, watershed, and riparian areas, while maintaining range condition at, or improving range condition toward, the potential for the ecological site.

### **2.2.8 Minerals**

On July 6, 1998, the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands* were included in the minerals management decisions within the Approved RMP.

Revisions were made to the original Coal appendix from the 1990 RMP. This appendix summarizes the final federal coal management decisions for the planning area. The revised appendix is included as Appendix F in this document.

#### *Leasable Minerals*

The following edit made on July 6, 1998, applies to the Coal section under Leasable Minerals in the Minerals section of the Approved RMP. The addition of the Carbon Basin to the coal decisions in the Great Divide RMP was analyzed in the *Environmental Assessment for Coal Planning Decisions in the Carbon Basin Area* (WY-037-EA7-146, BLM/WY/PL-97/025+1320, November 1997) and approved in the Decision Record (BLM/WY/PL-98/011+1320, March 1998). The Decision Record amended the RMP and this Amendment Change Sheet. Amendment Change Sheets Nos. 31-1, 55-1, 55-2, 67-1, and 68-1 document that change.

This section of the document originally read:

federal coal areas acceptable for further leasing consideration—

**Hanna Basin.** About 29,280 acres of public land and 760 acres of split estate lands containing about 190.6 million tons of federal coal.

**North Indian Springs.** About 3,840 acres of public land containing about 25.0 million tons of federal coal (acceptable for leasing consideration only for in situ coal development).

**Indian Springs.** About 2,500 acres of public land containing about 25.0 million tons of federal coal (acceptable for leasing consideration only for in situ coal development).

**Red Rim.** About 9,720 acres of public land containing about 40.6 million tons of federal coal.

**China Butte.** About 6,240 acres of public land containing about 73.9 million tons of federal coal.

**Atlantic Rim.** About 2,850 acres of public land and 800 acres of split estate lands containing about 79.1 million tons of federal coal.

This section of the document was changed as follows:

Federal coal areas acceptable for further leasing consideration—

**Hanna Basin.** About 29,280 acres of public land and 760 acres of split estate lands containing about 190.6 million tons of federal coal.

**North Indian Springs.** About 3,840 acres of public land containing about 25.0 million tons of federal coal (acceptable for leasing consideration only for in situ coal development).

**Indian Springs.** About 2,500 acres of public land containing about 25.0 million tons of federal coal (acceptable for leasing consideration only for in situ coal development).

**Red Rim.** About 9,720 acres of public land containing about 40.6 million tons of federal coal.

**China Butte.** About 6,240 acres of public land containing about 73.9 million tons of federal coal.

**Atlantic Rim.** About 2,850 acres of public land and 800 acres of split estate lands containing about 79.1 million tons of federal coal.

**Carbon Basin.** About 11,928 acres of federal coal lands (approximately 7,410 acres of public land and 4,518 acres of split estate) containing 313 million tons of federal coal. Of the 11,928 acres of federal coal land, 120 acres is acceptable for leasing consideration for subsurface mining only.

### 2.2.9 Off-Highway Vehicle Use

This section contains the only two amendments that were made to the Approved RMP. The following amendment, made on July 6, 1998, applies to the Off-Road Vehicle Management section under Management Actions within Recreation Management Decisions. A new map was added to show the change in ORV designation for Shirley Mountain. The change in ORV designation on Shirley Mountain was analyzed in the *Shirley Mountain Planning Review Travel Management Environmental Assessment* (EA#



WY-037-EA8-091, BLM/WY/PL-98/003+1200, December 1997) and approved in the Decision Record (BLM/WY/PL-98/017+1610, May 1998). The Decision Record amended the RMP. This Amendment Change Sheet and Amendment Change Sheet 38-1 document that change.

Another amendment made on January 26, 1998, applies to the General Planning Area section of the Off-Road Vehicle Management section under Recreation Management Decisions in the Approved RMP to add Shirley Mountain to areas where motor vehicle use is limited to designated roads and trails.

### **2.2.10 Paleontology**

The following edit applies to the Objective portion of the Paleontology section of the RMP.

#### ***Previous Version of Text***

There was no previous version of the text.

#### ***Current Version of Text***

On July 6, 1998, the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands* were included in the Objective portion of the Paleontology section.

### **2.2.11 Recreation Resources**

The *Standards for Healthy Rangelands* were also added to the recreation objective on July 6, 1998, to comply with BLM regulations and requirements.

### **2.2.12 Socioeconomic**

There are no maintenance edits for this section.

### **2.2.13 Soils and Watershed**

This change applies to the Soil, Water, and Air Management Objectives portion of the RMP. On January 26, 1998, this section of the document was changed to add the following statement:

To maintain or improve soil stability, within the potential of the ecological site, to insure adequate water infiltration, optimal plant growth, and minimal surface runoff.

The *Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Wyoming* (S&G) were approved by the Secretary of the Interior August 12, 1997. The development and application of the S&Gs are to achieve the four fundamentals of rangeland health outlined in the grazing regulations (43 CFR 4180.1). The above insert adds language specific to Standard #1.

The S&Gs are incorporated as part of the appendix materials (Appendix E) for this Resource Management Plan. Additional wording, clarification of existing text, and appropriate reference to the appendix have been added to the RMP. This action does not change any decisions in the RMP, and the RMP is in conformance with the S&Gs.

#### **2.2.14 Transportation and access**

There are no maintenance edits for this section.

#### **2.2.15 Vegetation**

##### *Sensitive Plants Management Decisions*

The following edit applies to the Sensitive Plants Management Decisions section of the RMP. On January 26, 1998, this paragraph was added to the document:

The following decisions describe the management objectives and management actions for known populations of sensitive plant species within the resource area. As habitats or sites for any future listed species are identified within the resource area, protection measures will be developed in consultation with the USFWS.

The *Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Wyoming* (S&G) were approved by the Secretary of the Interior August 12, 1997. The development and application of the S&Gs are to achieve the four fundamentals of rangeland health outlined in the grazing regulations (43 CFR 4180.1). The above insert adds language specific to Standard #4.

The S&Gs are incorporated as part of the appendix materials (Appendix E) for this Resource Management Plan. Additional wording, clarification of existing text, and appropriate reference to the appendix have been added to the RMP. This action does not change any decisions in the RMP, and the RMP is in conformance with the S&Gs.

#### **2.2.16 Visual Resources**

There are no maintenance edits for this section.

#### **2.2.17 Water Quality and Riparian Areas**

There are no maintenance edits for this section.

#### **2.2.18 Wild Horses**

On July 6, 1998, the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands* were included in the objective of wild horse management to comply with BLM regulations and requirements.

The following three edits were made to the Management Actions portion of the Wild Horse section of the Approved RMP:

This section of the document originally read:

There are three wild horse herd management areas (WHHMA) within the resource area. They are the Adobe Town WHHMA, the Flat Top WHHMA, and the Seven Lakes WHHMA (see Map 25). Each area is covered by a herd management area plan (HMAP). Current management levels for these areas are Adobe Town, 300-500; Flat Top, 40-100; and Seven Lakes, 66-135. Monitoring in these areas is ongoing. Herd management levels for each area will be evaluated to determine whether they are at appropriate management levels as soon as sufficient monitoring data are available. At that time, the HMAPs will be revised if necessary.

On June 21, 1999, this section was changed as follows:

There are three wild horse herd management areas (HMA) within the Rawlins Field Office (FO) jurisdiction. They are the Adobe Town HMA, the Stewart Creek HMA, and the Cyclone Rim/Antelope Hills HMA (see Maps 25 and 25A). Appropriate management levels (AML) for these areas are Adobe Town, 700; Stewart Creek, 150; and Cyclone Rim/Antelope Hills, 70. These HMAs and AMLs were determined in 1994 through the analysis and interpretation of extensive monitoring. The Cyclone Rim/Antelope Hills HMA overlaps the Rawlins/Lander FO boundary and is partly within the boundary of the Lander FO area. Inventory, population monitoring, and wild horse management actions are the responsibility of the Rawlins FO staff. Habitat monitoring within the Lander FO portion of the HMA is the responsibility of the Lander FO staff. Herd management area plans (HMAP) for each HMA will be revised and updated to reflect current policies and circumstances.

The Rawlins FO evaluation of wild horse HMAs was completed in 1994. The document *Wild Horse Herd Management Area Evaluation* analyzed and interpreted extensive monitoring data collected over a number of years. The Rawlins FO environmental assessment WY-037-EA4-122, *Management Changes in the Wild Horse HMAs* documented the environmental impacts of management changes recommended by the evaluation.

On February 22, 2000, this section of the document was changed as follows:

There are three wild horse herd management areas (HMA) within the Rawlins Field Office (FO) jurisdiction. They are the Adobe Town HMA, the Lost Creek HMA, and the Stewart Creek HMA (see Maps 25, 25A, and 25B). Appropriate management levels (AML) for these areas are Adobe Town, 700; Lost Creek, 70; and Stewart Creek, 150. These HMAs and AMLs were determined in 1994 through analysis and interpretation of extensive monitoring. The adjusted HMA boundaries are the result of additional monitoring since 1994. Inventory, population monitoring, and wild horse management actions are the responsibility of the Rawlins FO staff. A portion of the Antelope Hills HMA is within the Rawlins FO jurisdiction. Habitat monitoring for this portion of the Antelope Hills HMA is the responsibility of the Lander FO staff. Herd management area plans (HMAP) for each of the three Rawlins FO HMAs will be revised and updated to reflect current policies and circumstances.

The Rawlins FO evaluation of wild horse HMAs was completed in 1994. The document *Wild Horse Herd Management Area Evaluation* analyzed and interpreted extensive monitoring data collected over a number of years. The Rawlins FO environmental assessment WY-037-EA4-122, *Management Changes in the Wild Horse HMAs*, documented the environmental impacts of management changes recommended by the evaluation. Additional monitoring since completion of the above evaluation has resulted in better understanding of the wild horse population dynamics and resulted in the adjustment of HMA boundaries north of Interstate 80. A Rawlins Field Manager letter dated December 15, 1999, detailed the changes to the HMA boundaries.

On March 14, 2002, BLM changed this section of the document as follows:

There are three wild horse Herd Management Areas (HMA) within the Rawlins Field Office (FO) jurisdiction. They are the Adobe Town HMA, the Lost Creek HMA, and the Stewart Creek HMA (see Map 25; Revised 2002). Appropriate management levels (AML) for these areas are Adobe Town, 700; Lost Creek, 70; and Stewart Creek, 150. These HMAs and AMLs were determined in 1994 through analysis and interpretation of extensive monitoring. The adjusted HMA boundaries are the result of additional monitoring since 1994. Inventory, population monitoring, and wild horse management actions are the responsibility of the Rawlins FO staff. A portion of the Antelope Hills HMA is within the Rawlins FO jurisdiction. Habitat monitoring for this portion of the Antelope Hills HMA is the responsibility of the Lander FO staff. Herd management area plans (HMAP) for each of the three Rawlins FO HMAs will be revised and updated to reflect current policies and circumstances.

The Adobe Town HMA includes land within the Rawlins and Rock Springs Field Office administrative boundaries. The northern boundary of the Adobe Town HMA corresponds to the southeastern boundary of the Salt Wells HMA in the Rock Springs Field Office Area. The revised boundary is shown on revised Map 25. Included within the Adobe Town HMA is the Adobe Town Wilderness Study Area and all or portions of 14 grazing allotments. The respective AMLs for the two HMAs are unaffected by this maintenance action.

Current map sources have differing representations of the common boundary between the two HMAs. Recent technology has encouraged the comparison and resolution of those differences. Revised Map 25, which is supported by and derived from GIS maps, correctly describes that boundary. The GIS data that support revised Map 25 consist of the allotment boundary, range improvement, wild horse management area, and special management area themes, which include digital and tabular data.

### **2.2.19 Wildlife and Fisheries**

The management objective of this section in the Approved RMP was changed on July 6, 1998, to include the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands*. The reference to Appendix E, Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the State of Wyoming, concerns only the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands* in this RMP section. The *Standards*

*for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Wyoming* (S&G) were approved by the Secretary of the Interior August 12, 1997. The development and application of the S&Gs are to achieve the four fundamentals of rangeland health outlined in the grazing regulations (43 CFR 4180.1).

The S&Gs are incorporated as part of the appendix materials (Appendix E) for this RMP. Additional wording, clarification of existing text, and appropriate reference to the appendix have been added to the RMP. This action does not change any decisions in the RMP, and the RMP is in conformance with the S&Gs.

## **2.2.20 Special Management Areas**

### **Areas of Critical Environmental Concern**

On July 6, 1998, the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands* were added to this section of the Approved RMP. The reference to Appendix E, *Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the State of Wyoming*, concerns only the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands* in this RMP section. The *Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Wyoming* (S&G) were approved by the Secretary of Interior August 12, 1997. Standards and Guidelines were developed in compliance with the Department of Interior's final rule for grazing administration, effective August 21, 1995. The development and application of the S&Gs are to achieve the four fundamentals of rangeland health outlined in the grazing regulations (43 CFR 4180.1).

*Wyoming Instruction Memorandum 97-111*, dated September 26, 1997, indicates that the Standards and Guidelines will be incorporated in all Wyoming RMPs through plan maintenance. Additional wording, clarification of existing text, and appropriate reference to the appendix have been added to the RMP. This action does not change any decisions in the RMP, and the RMP is in conformance with the S&Gs.

The following changes were made the management objectives and actions within these specific ACECs:

#### *Jep Canyon*

These changes apply to the Objective portion of this section. This section of the document originally read:

The Jep Canyon area (about 13,320 acres of public land) is designated an ACEC (see Map 4).

On July 9, 1999, this section was changed as follows:

The Jep Canyon area (about 13,320 acres of public land) is designated an ACEC (see Map 4; revised June 1999).

Map 4 was revised. The Rawlins Field Office received notification from private landowners within the boundary of the Jep Canyon ACEC that they would prefer not to have their private lands identified as part of the ACEC as per the 1990 version of Map 4, Jep Canyon ACEC. The new Map 4, Jep Canyon ACEC, shows the ACEC as only consisting of federal lands in the area.

#### *Shamrock Hills Raptor Concentration Areas*

These changes apply to the Objective portion of this section. This section of the document originally read:

The Shamrock Hills Raptor Concentration Area (RCA) (about 17,280 acres of public land) is designated an ACEC (see Map 5).

On July 9, 1999, this section was changed as follows:

The Shamrock Hills Raptor Concentration Area (RCA) (about 17,280 acres of public land) is designated an ACEC (see Map 5, revised June 1999).

Map 5 was revised. The Rawlins Field Office received notification from private landowners within the boundary of the Shamrock Hills ACEC that they would prefer not to have their private lands identified as part of the ACEC as per the 1990 version of Map 5, Shamrock Hills ACEC. The new Map 5, Shamrock Hills ACEC, shows the ACEC as consisting of only federal lands in the area.

### **2.2.21 Laws, Regulations, and Policy**

A number of federal statutes have been enacted since the RMP was written in 1990. Following is a list of major legal authorities relevant to BLM land use planning, in addition to NEPA that have been enacted since 1990.

#### **The Clean Air Act of 1990, as Amended, 42 U.S. Code (U.S.C.) 7418**

Requires federal agencies to comply with all federal, state, and local requirements regarding the control and abatement of air pollution. This effort includes abiding by the requirements of State Implementation Plans.

#### **The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, 25 U.S.C. 3001**

Provides for the protection of Native American graves and for other purposes.

#### **Public Law 101-512, November 5, 1990 (104 Statute 1915)**

Authorizes BLM to negotiate and enter into cooperative arrangements with public and private agencies, organizations, institutions, and individuals to implement challenge cost-share programs.

#### **The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act as Amended by Federal Facility Compliance Act of 1992 (42 U.S.C. 6901-6992)**

Authorizes the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to manage, by regulation,

hazardous wastes on active disposal operations. Waives sovereign immunity for federal agencies with respect to all federal, state, and local solid and hazardous waste laws and regulations. Makes federal agencies subject to civil and administrative penalties for violations, and to cost assessments for the administration of the enforcement.

**The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-62)**

Requires 10 federal agencies to launch a 3-year pilot project beginning in 1994, to develop annual performance plans that specify measurable goals, and to produce annual reports showing how they are achieving those goals.

**The Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for 1994 (P.L. 103-138)**

Provides that funds shall be available to BLM for Mining Law Administration Program operations, to be reduced by amounts collected from annual mining claim fees.

**Secretarial Order 3175-1995 (incorporated into the Departmental Manual at 512 DM 2)**

Requires that, if Department of the Interior (DOI) agency actions might affect Indian trust resources, the agency explicitly address those potential impacts in planning and decision documents and consult with the tribal government whose trust resources are potentially affected by the federal action.

**Executive Order 13007-1996 (Indian Sacred Sites), 61 *Federal Register* 26771**

Requires federal agencies, to the extent practicable, permitted by law, and not clearly inconsistent with essential agency functions, to—

- Accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners
- Avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites.

**The Electronic FOIA Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-231)**

Requires that government offices make more information available in electronic format to the public.

**The Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-106 5001)**

Requires agencies to use information technology more effectively to improve mission performance and service to the public, and to strengthen the quality of decisions about technology and mission needs through integrated planning, budgeting, and evaluation.

**Secretarial Order 3206-1997 (American Indian Tribal Rights, Federal–Tribal Trust Responsibilities, and the Endangered Species Act)**

Requires DOI agencies to consult with Indian tribes when agency actions to protect a listed species, as a result of compliance with ESA, affect or may affect Indian lands, tribal trust resources, or the exercise of American Indian tribal rights.

**Executive Order 13084-1998 (Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments)**

Provides, in part, that each federal agency shall establish regular and meaningful

consultation and collaboration with Indian tribal governments in developing regulatory practices on federal matters that significantly or uniquely affect their communities.

**The Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999, as included in P.L. 105-277, Section 101(e).**

Reauthorizes the collection of annual mining claim maintenance fees through 2001.

Extends the recreation fee demonstration program through fiscal year (FY) 2001, with collected funds remaining available through FY 2004.

**Executive Order 13112-1999 (Invasive Species)**

Provides that no federal agency shall authorize, fund, or carry out actions that it believes are likely to cause or promote the introduction or spread of invasive species unless, pursuant to guidelines that it has prescribed, the agency has determined and made public its determination that the benefits of such actions clearly outweigh the potential harm caused by invasive species and that all feasible and prudent measures to minimize risk or harm will be taken in conjunction with the actions.

**P.L. 106-291, the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriation Act, 2001**

Provides expenses necessary for the protection, use, improvement, development, disposal, cadastral surveying, classification, acquisition of easements and other interest in land, and performance of other functions. It also includes the maintenance of facilities, as authorized by law, in the management of lands and their resources under jurisdiction of the BLM, including the general administration of the Bureau, and the assessment of mineral potential of public land.

## **2.3 CONTINUATION OF EXISTING MANAGEMENT DIRECTION AND ACTIONS BY LAND USE OR RESOURCE USES**

This section is a synopsis of procedures and actions that have resulted from new laws, regulations or policies that have been implemented since 1990. New management objectives and actions are shown in this section and are alphabetized as in Section 2.1 and 2.2. Appendices referred to in this section are either modified versions of previous documents referred to in Section 2 new guidance documents that were not included in the original RMP or subsequent maintenance edits and actions.

### **2.3.1 Air Quality**

Air quality was not addressed independently in the 1990 RMP and was only briefly mentioned in the Soils, Water, and Air Management section. Since 1990, federal and state agencies in Wyoming have raised air quality issues. Air quality concerns are largely driven by development of the oil and gas industry in the Rawlins Resource Management Plan Planning Area (RMPPA). Currently air quality is maintained within or above required standards through cooperative management of emissions with the oil and gas industry, the State of Wyoming, and other federal agencies.



Air quality is maintained to protect air from deterioration caused by the release of toxic or hazardous materials or wastes and to identify desired future conditions and areawide criteria or restrictions through application of the *Clean Air Act's* requirements for compliance with applicable National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) (Section 106); State Implementation Plans (Section 110); Control of Pollution from Federal Facilities (Section 118); prevention of Significant Deterioration, including visibility impacts to mandatory Federal Class I Areas (Section 160 et seq.); and Conformity Analysis and Determination (Section 176 (c)).

The RFO currently carries out management practices designed to meet air resource management objectives. These practices are addressed in activity plans such as AMPs, HMPs, Watershed Management Plans, etc. The BLM will identify site-specific actions within the scope of the Bureau's authority (e.g., application of dust inhibitors to reduce fugitive dust) to achieve desired air quality conditions from direct or authorized actions. In addition, the BLM may offer to the Department of Environmental Quality a list of possible site-specific control measures or processes for their consideration in permitting emission-generating facilities.

### 2.3.2 Cultural Resources

Cultural resource management objectives and actions were recognized in the 1990 RMP. Since 1990, BLM has continued to identify protection measures and opportunities to use cultural properties for scientific, educational, recreational, and traditional purposes. Desired future condition and management actions for these use allocations are listed in BLM Information Bulletin No. 2002-101, *Cultural Resource Considerations in Resource Management Plans*. Groups and individuals with historic, scientific, Native American, interpretive, and similar kinds of information and interests are invited to participate in the identification of cultural resources and are consulted. BLM is also pursuing opportunities to acquire legal access to trail segments on land not administered by BLM.

Currently, management practices are carried out in accordance with laws, policies, and guidance to meet the objectives for cultural resource management and to appropriately mitigate unavoidable adverse effects to cultural resources prior to their disturbance or destruction. New laws, policies and guidance that have impacted on management objectives and actions after the 1990 RMP ROD was signed include—

- *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966*, as amended (particularly Sections 106 and 110) (1992)
- *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act* (1990)
- *Executive Order 13007—Indian Sacred Sites* (1996)
- *Executive Order 13084 – Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments* (1998)
- State Protocol Agreement Between the Wyoming BLM State Director and the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer (1998)

- BLM Information Bulletin No. 2002-101, Cultural Resource Considerations in Resource Management Plans (2002)
- *The Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (1997) and Wyoming Instruction Memorandum 97-111.*

### 2.3.3 Fires (Wildland)

After 1990, wildland fire management objectives were expanded to include a focus on fire suppression in areas proximal to the wildland urban interface (WUI). Management action decisions in the RFO are currently under review, because of new guidance contained in the National Fire Plan (2001). BLM is currently incorporating the Wyoming Standards for Healthy Rangelands into fire prevention, fire suppression, fuel management, and rehabilitation actions on site-specific basis in support of identified fire management objectives. A wildland fire situation analysis (WFSA) will be conducted to determine the appropriate course of action on fires that cannot be contained within the first burning period or if they exceed the criteria established for limited suppression.

A long-term fire management plan will be developed to support new guidance contained in the National Fire Plan. In addition, prescribed burns are being evaluated for hazardous materials before burning. BLM consults with tribes, federal agencies, and state and local governments regarding smoke management where required by the *Clean Air Act*, Executive Order 12088. *The Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (1997)* and *Wyoming Instruction Memorandum 97-111*, are also guiding fire management practices. *Instructional Bulletin No. 97-2075* offered a flowchart that provides for the sequence of events that is currently followed in the management of wildland fires in the RFO.

Prescribed burning will be used to achieve management objectives such as those for allotment management plans (AMP) and habitat management plans (HMP), as well as meet the fuel reduction needs of the fire program as per the 2000 National Fire Plan (NFP). Prescribed fire proposals will be considered case-by-case to ensure environmental integrity and consistency with multiple resource objectives and activity plans.

### 2.3.4 Forestry

*The Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (1997)* and *Wyoming Instruction Memorandum 97-111*, introduced after 1990, have been incorporated into the management objectives and actions for forestry. The overall management objective is being expanded to include forest health, wildlife habitat, and fuel reduction. To accomplish the expanded objective, BLM will identify a suite of management actions and associated best management practices that can be applied to meet desired future conditions and underlying land use allocations. In addition, a forest insect and parasite infestation management plan must be prepared with the objective of preventing declining health of healthy pine and aspen forest stands with the cooperation of private landowners, and state and federal foresters. Timber sales of posts, poles, and firewood have also been identified as a method of reducing forest fire fuels. In the 1990 RMP, only 300 acres of land were identified as not being available for

management of forest products. This acreage has subsequently been increased to 500 acres.

### 2.3.5 Health/Safety and Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials were not addressed in the 1990 RMP. Management objectives and actions are guided by BLM manuals MS-1703 (*Hazardous Materials Management*); H-1703-1 (*CERCLA Response Actions Handbook*); H-2101-4 (*Pre-Acquisition Environmental Site Assessments*); and W.O. Instruction Memorandum No. 2002-138 (03/29/02). Management objectives include protecting public health, safety, and the environment on public lands; emphasizing waste reduction for BLM authorized and initiated actions; compliance with applicable federal and state laws; minimization of federal exposure to the liabilities associated with hazardous materials management and waste management on public lands; prevention of waste contamination from BLM-authorized actions; maintenance of the health of the land through assessment, cleanup, and restoration of contaminated sites; identification and control of imminent hazards or threats to human health and the environment from hazardous substance releases on public lands; ensuring that authorized activities on public lands comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, policies, guidance, and procedures; and aggressively pursuing potentially responsible parties to correct their contamination of public lands and facilities or to recover the cleanup costs.

Management actions include the following—

- Precautions to prevent hazardous material releases into the environment and providing adequate warning to potentially affected communities should such a release occur
- Ascertaining through a Preacquisition Environmental Assessment the nature and extent of potential liability resulting from hazardous substances or other environmental problems associated with real property during acquisitions and disposals
- Reporting, securing, and cleaning up public lands contaminated with hazardous wastes according to federal and state laws, regulations, and contingency plans, including the *Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act* (CERCLA)
- Identifying parties responsible for contamination who will be liable for cleanup and resource damage costs, as prescribed by law
- Identifying appropriate mitigation for surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with all types of hazardous materials and waste management and all types of fire management. All incidences of hazardous materials on public land will be handled as outlined in the Rawlins Field Office Oil, Gas, and Hazardous Substances Spill Plan of March 1998. All actions are reviewed both internally and externally (if appropriate) for compliance with federal and state regulations.

Special stipulations are also developed as part of the permit or lease to safeguard human health, prevent environmental damage, and limit BLM liability.

Detailed hazardous material management actions specific to oil and gas field operations are developed using the guidelines listed above. An example of a field-specific set of objectives and actions currently being applied in the RMPPA is shown in Appendix C of the *Record of Decision and EIS for the Continental Divide/Wamsutter II Natural Gas Project*, May 2000.

### **2.3.6 Lands and Realty**

The FLPMA of 1976, as amended, and the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands* have expanded the objectives for managing BLM-administered public lands.

#### ***Utility and Transportation Systems***

In the *KENETECH/PacifiCorp Windpower Project Environmental Impact Statement* (1995) new management and mitigation measures to avoid, reduce, or eliminate wind power utility impacts were adopted when the EIS ROD was approved in 1997. Although specific to the project, these measures do provide management guidelines for the adoption of future projects. Guidelines include the following:

The holder shall submit a final map showing the location of all roads to be used for access to power lines. The map shall show the roads in three categories a) used with no improvement or maintenance within the existing disturbed area only, b) used with surface disturbance required outside of existing disturbed areas, and c) new construction.

The holder shall submit a Class III Cultural Resource Inventory Report for any roads in category a or b in the above item.

230-kV transmission line structures will be located at least 40 ft from pipelines where feasible, and conductors would be at least 30 ft above ground level at all pipeline and road crossings. Structures will be located at least 100 ft from all streams where feasible.

Windplant facilities will be designed or equipped to prevent raptor perching.

All poles for collection and transmission lines located within .25 mi of greater sage-grouse leks, and near prairie dog colonies and black-footed ferret habitats, will be equipped with antiperching devices to minimize their take by bird of prey.

To protect big game winter habitat, construction activities will not be allowed from November 15 to April 30 within certain areas encompassed by right-of-way (ROW) grants. The same criteria apply to defined big game birthing areas from May 1 to June 30.

All substations and other areas hazardous to wildlife will be fenced as directed by BLM.

### ***Communication Sites and Large Structures***

A management action pertaining to communication sites requires operators and users to prevent releases of toxic or hazardous materials or wastes and to take appropriate corrective actions (mitigations measures) if releases occur. Management actions pertaining to the construction and location of large structures (i.e., towers) are similar to those for wind power utility towers.

### ***Landownership Adjustments***

In the 1990 RMP, 66,000 acres of land were identified as available for consideration for disposal under the disposal criteria under land ownership adjustments. Currently, certain parcels have been removed from consideration because they have legal public access. The revised area for consideration of disposal is 48,493 acres.

The inventory of public lands that meet the FLPMA disposal criteria has not been completed for the entire RMP planning area. Currently, all land disposals and acquisitions are subject to a preacquisition environmental site assessment, as required by 602 Departmental Manual (DM) 2 in accordance with manual H-2101-4 to determine whether recognized environmental conditions are present that would pose an imminent threat or long-term risk to human health or the environment.

Termination of the R&PP lease for the Bairoil landfill was approved by a memorandum signed by the Rawlins Field Manager on January 24, 2001. The site was reclaimed in conjunction with the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality Solid and Hazardous Waste Regulations in 1994.

New guidance for land and realty actions is also being provided in the Land Exchange Criteria for the Great Divide RMP RFO, as described in Appendix G.

Consistent with the Wyoming BLM access policy, BLM will pursue opportunities to acquire or maintain legal access to BLM-administered land. The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail has been moved up a level in importance, from low to moderate importance, with respect to pursuit of access. Additional access needs for BLM land are currently considered as they are identified or as opportunities arise. Land ownership adjustment is a tool that allows BLM to consolidate and improve management of the public lands.

### ***Withdrawals***

BLM continues to initiate new withdrawals which would close areas to operation of the public land laws, including disposal, and to mineral location under the mining laws. This includes recreation sites, 650 acres; historic sites, 1,320 acres; and sensitive plant habitat, for which the acreage will depend on the size of the plant population.

Land withdrawals included in the 1990 RMP have been modified. The Stratton Hydrology withdrawal (2,694 acres) and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) withdrawal of 73,290 acres are no longer included under existing withdrawals. The Nine-Mile

Recreation Sites (40 acres), the Overland Trail (680 acres), the Prospect Creek Proposed Recreation Site (5 acres), the Shirley Mountain Proposed Campground (20 acres), and the Gibben's Beardtongue Site (10 acres) are no longer new withdrawal initiatives (see Table 2.3.6-1).

### **2.3.7 Livestock Grazing**

Implementation of intensive grazing management systems in the RFO constitutes the primary means of improving or maintaining desired range conditions. Grazing permits, AMPs, Allotment Management Agreements, and continuing consultation with permittees provide the necessary guidance for achieving grazing management objectives. BLM staff work closely with operators, in accordance with the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands* (Appendix E), to determine the most appropriate methods for achieving the standards.

Currently, the Rawlins RMPPA is managed to enhance livestock grazing while maintaining a balance between economic uses and the enhancement of wildlife habitat, watershed, and riparian ecosystem areas. This practice is ongoing while maintaining range condition at, or improving range condition toward, the potential for the ecological site over the long term.

The total authorized livestock grazing use may not exceed the recognized active preference in the planning area. Current and updated AUMs for annual forage use can be found in the table of range allotment information for the Rawlins RMPPA, which is included in Section 3.7 of Chapter 3.0.

Expanded livestock management actions are currently applied in the RFO. Applications for changes in kind of livestock or season of use are considered in allotments, subject to review and determination of range suitability and impacts on riparian and other sensitive areas. Applications for the transfer of grazing preference are reviewed carefully. Monitoring data are reviewed, and special attention is given to the condition and function of authorized range improvements before issuance of permanent grazing authorizations. All identified sensitive plants are to be given priority in the management of the area where they occur.

The design and coordination of grazing management practices and systems, as well as range improvement projects, give special attention to design and implementation criteria that meet the needs of priority watersheds.

The Great Divide rangeland monitoring plan was developed in 1985 and is currently being revised to include all resource monitoring that occurs within the office area. Grazing administration continues to be the highest program priority. An important priority is to continue full support for special management opportunities and to seek additional opportunities to pursue projects, which include the Ferris-Seminole Ecosystem Plan, the Muddy Creek Watershed Demonstration Area, and the Daley/Grizzly Special Management Area. The final priority will be to conduct additional rangeland monitoring, working toward achieving compliance with rangeland standards and program specific objectives.

The allotment categorizations of maintenance (M), improve (I), and custodial (C) outlined in the Great Divide RMP were replaced by *Standards for Healthy Rangelands*, as described in the 1995 revisions to the grazing regulations, and the 1994 Environmental Impact Statement (*Instruction Memorandum No. 98-91*). These two documents also replaced the Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) in guiding the grazing management program. The six-step implementing standards and guidelines require authorized officers to—

- Prioritize areas by allotments, groups of allotments, watersheds or other areas and set a schedule for addressing them, giving priority to areas believed to be at risk—in degraded condition or downward trend and in danger of losing potential.
- Conduct assessments to determine whether the areas are meeting standards and conforming to guidelines or making significant progress toward meeting standards and conforming to guidelines (128 allotments with S&G assessment have been completed, 500 range improvement projects developed, and 200 allotments with grazing strategies in place through 2001).
- Determine if existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use are significant factors in failing to achieve the standards and conform with the guidelines.
- Take appropriate action (in consultation with permittees, lessees, the state, and interested public) and modify the terms and conditions by the start of the next grazing season, to ensure that the terms and conditions result in meeting the standards and conform to the guidelines, or make significant progress toward meeting the standards and conform to the guidelines if existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use are significant factors in failing to achieve the standards and conform with the guidelines.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of management under the modified terms and conditions in meeting the standards and conforming to the guidelines. If further monitoring and evaluation indicate that the area has not achieved or is not making significant progress toward meeting the standards and conforming with the guidelines, managers must further modify the terms and conditions by the start of the next grazing season, in consultation with permittees, lessees, the state and interested public, to ensure the terms and conditions result in meeting the standards and conforming to the guidelines or making significant progress toward meeting the standards and conforming to the guidelines.
- Submit by state assessment progress each year as part of the National Rangeland Inventory, Monitoring, and Evaluation Report.

In addition, the following six standards from the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management* (1997) are currently being used to assess allotment range quality—

- Standard #1. Regarding the potential of the ecological site, the soils are stable and allow for water infiltration to provide for optimal plant growth and minimal surface runoff.
- Standard #2. Riparian and wetland vegetation has structural, age, and species diversity characteristic of the stage of channel succession, and is resilient and capable of recovering from natural and human disturbances, in order to provide forage and cover, capture sediment, dissipate energy, and provide for ground water recharge.
- Standard #3. Upland vegetation on each ecological site consists of plant communities appropriate to the site, which are resilient, diverse, and able to recover from natural and human disturbances.
- Standard #4. Rangelands are capable of sustaining viable populations and a diversity of native plant and animal species appropriate to the habitat. Habitats that support or could support threatened species, endangered species, species of special concern, or sensitive species will be maintained or enhanced.
- Standard #5. Water quality meets State of Wyoming standards and complies with all Clean Water Act requirements, rules, and laws.
- Standard #6. Air quality meets State of Wyoming standards and complies with the Clean Air Act requirements, rules, and laws.

Currently, grazing systems are designed to achieve the resource objective. Existing AMPs are maintained or revised as needed, with new AMPs developed for more complex management scenarios. Management agreements are developed with livestock operators for less complex situations. Maintenance and development of range improvements may be undertaken to enhance multiple-use values. Private investment will be encouraged and authorized when consistent with the multiple-use objectives for the allotment. Proposals for changes in seasons of use will be reviewed and allowed if they do not conflict with other values identified in the NEPA process.

### **2.3.8 Minerals**

The public lands and federal mineral estate in the RFO are available for orderly and efficient development of mineral resources. All mineral leases are issued with needed restrictions to protect the environment from releases of hazardous, toxic, and waste materials. Stipulations pertaining to prevention and mitigation of releases and compliance with applicable federal, state, and local hazardous materials and safety regulations are required.

#### ***Leasable Minerals***

Generally, under the existing Approved RMP, the RFO planning area is open, with the exception of coal resources, to consideration for exploration, leasing, and development for all leasable minerals, which include oil, gas, and coal, in accordance with all applicable provisions (e.g., restrictions, prohibitions). All activities will be conducted in



accordance with the *Guidelines for Surface-Disturbing and Disruptive Activities* (Appendix C) and the new Standard Special Coal Stipulation (Appendix H).

Detailed management objectives and actions for leasable minerals were included in the 1990 RMP. After the ROD was signed, the RFO revised acreages for federal coal areas. The Hanna Basin contains 30,040 acres of public land with 190.6 million tons of recoverable reserves. Approximately 27 million tons of federal coal have been recovered using strip mining. An additional 16 million tons of federal coal have been extracted using underground mining methods. For the Indian Springs coal field, the acreage was revised from 2,500 acres of land to 2,560 acres of land containing federal coal. In the Red Rim coal field, the estimated tonnage of available federal coal has been revised from 25.0 million tons to 31.0 million tons. The estimated tonnage of federal coal for China Butte has also been revised upwardly from 73.9 million tons to 125.0 million tons. Carbon Basin has also been added as a coal field area where about 11,928 acres of federal coal lands (approximately 7,410 acres of public land and 4,518 acres of split estate) containing 313 million tons of federal coal. Of the 11,928 acres of federal coal land, 120 acres are acceptable for leasing consideration for subsurface mining only. The addition of the Carbon Basin to the coal decisions of the Great Divide RMP was analyzed in the *EA for Coal Planning Decisions in the Carbon Basin Area* (WY-037-EA-146, BLM/WY/PL-97/025+1320, November 1997). For revised coal figures and a combined coal areas map, see Appendix F.

Currently the entire planning area is open to oil and gas leasing. As a result of new laws and policies (P.L. 98-146 and 43 CFR 3100.0-3a 2viii and the RFO Wilderness EIS) surface-disturbing activities are prohibited in Wilderness Study Areas (WSA).

BLM RFO continues to provide opportunities for leasing, exploration, and development of oil and gas, while protecting other resource values. Currently, gas from coal reservoirs or coalbed methane (CBM) is considered to be the same as any other gas, as defined by 43 CFR 3000.0-5(a) and all regulatory processes, are the same as the standard oil and gas regulations.

Currently, oil and gas leasing in the RFO is guided by a process for Fluid Mineral Leasing in the State of Wyoming. The objective of the Fluid Mineral Leasing Program is to foster and encourage the exploration and development of federal oil and gas resources in a manner that is responsive to the nation's economic and security needs and in conformance with the principles of balanced multiple-use management.

Lands are available through a leasing process for competitive and noncompetitive leases.

Stipulations to minimize the impacts that oil and gas operations may cause on other land resources, uses, and users are placed on oil and gas parcels in advance of lease issuance. Stipulations that allow, but control, surface use are a valuable management tool to achieve multiple use, because such stipulations allow the public to benefit from both the production of the fluid minerals and the continuation of other land uses, without resorting to allocation of lands for exclusive uses. Stipulations that prohibit surface use represent a form of land use allocation and are avoided whenever other methods to reduce impacts

are possible. For example, stipulations requiring mitigative measures may reduce impacts of oil and gas lease operations to an acceptable level. It is a BLM requirement to develop and set forth lease stipulations in the RMPs to ensure protection and opportunities for developing oil and gas resources in advance of lease issuance.

All federal mineral estate subject to oil and gas leasing, regardless of surface ownership, is subject to the standard lease terms and conditions provided in the lease form. Once a lease is issued, the lessee has the right to use as much of the leased lands as necessary to explore for, drill for, mine, extract, remove, and dispose of all the leased oil and gas resource in a leasehold, subject to the stipulations attached to the lease; restrictions derived from specific, nondiscretionary laws; and any other reasonable measures that may be required by the authorized officer to minimize adverse impacts on other resource values, land uses, or land users not addressed in the lease stipulations at the time lease operations are proposed.

Development of the oil and gas mineral rights granted to a lessee is totally discretionary. Neither the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended and supplemented, or the Federal Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987 compels the lessee to develop the leasehold. A federal oil and gas lease is issued for a primary term of 10 years and may continue for so long thereafter as oil or gas is produced in paying quantities. If at the end of a lease's primary term, no diligent drilling activities are taking place and there is nothing else to extend the lease (i.e., it is not committed to a producing communitization or unitization agreement and does not contain a well capable of producing in paying quantities), the lease simply expires and the lands are again available for competitive oil and gas leasing.

Currently, the Wyoming State Office holds six competitive oil and gas lease sale auctions a year. The Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale Notice comprises lands nominated for inclusion in a sale by entities interested in leasing the oil and gas rights, lands under the jurisdiction of other surface management agencies, or Bureau motion lands.

In 1994, a MOU (BLM MOU # WY920-94-79) was signed with the State of Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (WOGCC). In the MOU, BLM and the WOGCC agreed—

- To develop and share information of common need; plan and implement oil and gas development in coordination with surface management issues
- To maintain a good faith effort to keep one another informed and advised of plans and actions which might affect each other; work in harmony to achieve the objectives of their policies and regulations
- That the Reservoir Management Team (Casper Field Office) will be the WOGCC's local point of contact for disbursement of correspondence related to the MOU.

Under this MOU, reclamation plans for each well are approved by following BLM and WOGCC abandonment procedures.

### ***Locatable Minerals***

In the RFO, all locatable minerals actions are reviewed to ensure compliance with BLM bonding policy for surface-disturbing activities. In 43 CFR 3809 stipulations were introduced to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation of public lands by operations authorized by the mining laws. These stipulations are applied by the RFO. Anyone intending to develop mineral resources on public lands in the RFO must prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the land and reclaim areas, as well as providing for maximum possible coordination with appropriate state agencies, to avoid duplication and to ensure that operators prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of public lands. Lands under wilderness review are subject to 43 CFR 3802.

A plan of operations must be submitted to the RFO and approval must be obtained before beginning operations greater than casual use. A plan of operations must be submitted for any bulk sampling in which 1,000 tons or more of ore will be removed. A plan of operations must be submitted for any operations causing surface disturbances greater than casual use in National Wild and Scenic River Systems; ACECs areas designated as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System administered by BLM; areas designated as closed to off-highway vehicle use; any lands or waters known to contain federally proposed or listed threatened or endangered species or their proposed or designated habitat, unless BLM allows for other action under a formal land use plan or threatened or endangered species recovery plan; and National Monuments and National Conservation Areas administered by BLM.

The RFO has a process of establishing leasing stipulations that provide for mitigation and reclamation of impacts.

### ***Salable Minerals***

The management actions stipulated in 43 CFR 3809 and cited in the previous section on locatable minerals are applicable to salable minerals as well.

### ***Geophysical Exploration***

Geophysical exploration was not addressed in the 1990 RMP. Currently, in the RFO, geophysical notices of intent are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. All acreage in the planning area is subject to various appropriate limitations. Generally, all authorizations will be issued with appropriate application of surface disturbance mitigation requirements, as presented in Appendix C.

### **2.3.9 Off-Highway Vehicle Use**

Under the original RMP, OHV use was indirectly addressed under recreation management decisions. The RFO has acknowledged that, in the past decade, new recreation vehicles have become popular and that OHV use must be addressed through a new OHV implementation plan. In the interim before this plan is issued, BLM will continue to coordinate and cooperate with owners of adjacent properties, interested individuals, organizations, and agencies in preparing plans for implementation of OHV

plans, guided by the *National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use on Public Lands* (January 2001).

### 2.3.10 Paleontology

In the 1990 RMP, management objectives and actions were addressed cursorily. Additional objectives have been identified by BLM, including the following—

- To identify area wide criteria or site-specific use restrictions to ensure that areas containing, or likely to contain, vertebrate or noteworthy occurrences of invertebrate or plant fossils are identified and evaluated prior to authorizing surface-disturbing activities
- To ensure that management decisions are developed to promote the scientific, educational, and recreational uses of fossils
- To identify and mitigate threats to paleontological resources.

Current paleontology management actions are derived from the Probable Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) system developed by the Paleontological Center of Excellence and Region 2 (USFS) as modified by the Regional Paleontologist, Wyoming BLM, in 2002. Inventories are conducted on a case-by-case basis for each proposed surface-disturbing activity to ensure maintenance or integrity of paleontological values. These include the following—

- The operator shall be responsible for informing all persons associated with this project that they shall be subject to prosecution for damaging, altering, excavating, or removing any archaeological, historical, or vertebrate fossil objects or site.
- If archaeological, historical, or vertebrate fossil materials are discovered, the operator shall suspend all operations that further disturb such materials and immediately contact the authorized officer.
- Operations shall not resume until written authorization to proceed is issued by the authorized officer.
- Within 5 working days, the authorized officer will evaluate the discovery and inform the operator of actions that will be necessary to prevent loss of significant cultural or scientific values.
- The operator shall be responsible for the cost of any mitigation required by the authorized officer.
- The authorized officer will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation.
- Upon verification from the authorized officer that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator shall be allowed to resume operations.

The *Standards for Healthy Rangelands* have also provided guidance for paleontological resources since the RMP was finalized in 1990.

### **2.3.11 Recreation Resources**

Since 1990, the objectives for recreation have been expanded with additional objectives that state that undesirable impacts of recreation on the environment will be mitigated and that access to recreational opportunities will be improved as well.

An activity plan for Corral Creek will be updated during the implementation of the new RMP.

Management actions are addressing ongoing efforts to make recreational sites more accessible to people with disabilities, including replacing old inaccessible rest rooms, as mandated by Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) and by policy following Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), where possible.

Other management actions include considering additional recreation sites for development as opportunities arise and as demand warrants; pursuing actions to protect and enhance sites where habitat improvements (e.g., fisheries) have created a new recreation attraction; and identifying access opportunities to the North Platte River, starting with limited improvements at the Big Creek Site and its access road.

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail SRMA has been expanded from the original 80 miles in the 1990 RMP to 110 miles currently. In addition, the trail will also be managed to protect the expanse; land exchanges will be pursued to consolidate the contiguity of the trail where opportunities arise; and kiosks will be erected at each end of the RFO portion of the trail to provide information on access to the trail.

In the Shirley Mountains SRMA, the cave system will continue to be protected while other resource uses will be allowed aboveground. Hunting is currently the primary activity in the SRMA. If land exchanges occur, any private acreage that becomes public land within and adjacent to the SRMA boundaries will become part of the SRMA.

### **2.3.12 Socioeconomic**

There are no management objectives and actions pertaining to socioeconomic factors. BLM does not manage socioeconomic factors.

### **2.3.13 Soils and Watershed**

Soils and watershed management objectives were addressed collectively under soil, water, and air management decisions in the 1990 RMP. In addition to the management objectives identified in the 1990 RMP, the RFO currently manages soil to maintain or improve soil stability and to protect the soil from deterioration that might be caused by the release of toxic or hazardous materials or wastes. BLM is implementing intensive soil and watershed land use plans to mitigate salt and sediment loading caused by surface-disturbing activities and to address site-specific problems to meet tribal, state,

and local water quality requirements, such as the *Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act* (16 U.S.C. 1001-1009) and the *Clean Water Act* (33 U.S.C. 1251).

### **2.3.14 Transportation and Access**

Affording adequate transportation facilities to provide access to resources on public lands is a pressing issue that was not addressed in the 1990 RMP. Problems associated with transportation facilities and access to public land resources are exacerbated by the checkerboard pattern of landownership in much of the Rawlins RMPPA.

By recent direction from the Washington BLM Office, *Instruction Memorandum No. 2002-196* was issued on June 25, 2002 by the Assistant Director pertaining to minerals, realty, and resources protection. In this memorandum, new guidance on ROW corridor and ROW use area planning and designation, and the consideration of energy-related ROWs and other ROWs as part of the BLM land use planning process are provided. In essence, this memorandum determines ROW objectives and actions, thereby affecting transportation facilities across, and access to, public lands.

The transportation objective for access management in the RFO is three-fold: (1) to provide suitable public access to BLM-administered public lands, (2) to support the goals and objectives of other resource programs for managing BLM-administered public lands, and (3) to respond to public demand for land use authorizations. The last aspect of this objective may include acquiring new access where needed; maintaining existing access; expanding existing access facilities; or abandoning and closing access where it is not compatible with resource values and objectives. Much of the transportation objective is achieved through obtaining ROWs.

Pertaining to ROW issues, the overall objective is to continue to make BLM-administered lands available for needed ROWs where consistent with national, state, and local plans and to use ROWs in common to minimize environmental impacts and proliferation of separate ROWs.

An additional objective is to ensure that there are sufficient means for developing energy where authorizations require a ROW (e.g., wind energy) and for transporting energy supplies in an effective manner (e.g., oil and gas pipelines and electric transmission lines), while maintaining current environmental standards and good stewardship principles.

Management actions pertaining to transportation and access to public lands include the consideration that access across private lands will be pursued as needed through a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, purchase of ROWs or easements, land exchange, reciprocal ROWs, and other statutory authorities. Specific routes and acquisition procedures for securing access need to be determined through route analyses and environmental analyses as part of specific project and activity planning. Where appropriate, land exchanges or cooperative agreements will be considered and used to provide access needs.

Two primary ROW management actions drive decisions in the RFO. First, all land use plans must assess the impacts of land use decisions on the current and potential ROW corridors and ROW use areas, as well as the authorization of energy-related and other ROWs within land affected by the plan. Second, the need for ROW corridors and ROW use areas and the effects of land use plan decisions on energy-related ROWs must be factored into all of the steps of the land use planning process.

### **2.3.15 Vegetation**

Vegetation objectives and management actions were not addressed in a separate section in the 1990 RMP. The need for vegetation objectives and management actions has become more pressing and is addressed in the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands* introduced in 1997.

General management objectives for vegetation include maintaining and improving ecological range condition for watershed values, wildlife habitat, and forage; and for the management of fuel loading to reduce the likelihood of catastrophic, resource damaging wildfires (See the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands*, Appendix E.) Management actions currently applied in the RFO include livestock management and prescribed fires as the preferred method of vegetation manipulation, as well as biological, chemical, and mechanical methods, which are considered on a case-by-case basis.

#### ***Noxious Weeds and Nonnative Invasive Species***

Noxious weeds and nonnative invasive species objectives and management actions were not addressed in the 1990 RMP. Objectives and actions applied in the RFO are the result of a new policy established through the *Federal Noxious Weed Act* (Public Law 93-629) and the accompanying Executive Order 13112. Noxious weed and nonnative species invasions contribute to the loss of rangeland productivity, increased soil erosion, reduced species and structural diversity, and loss of wildlife habitat. In some instances, such weeds and nonnative species are hazardous to human health and welfare. Management objectives applied after 1990 include controlling the introduction and proliferation of noxious weeds and competing undesirable plant species and reducing the extent and density of established populations to acceptable levels. Management actions for noxious weeds currently applied by the RFO, as mandated by Executive Order 13112, include the following—

- Preventing the introduction of invasive species; detecting and responding rapidly to and controlling populations of such species in a cost-effective and environmentally sound manner
- Monitoring invasive species populations accurately and reliably
- Providing for restoration of native species, habitat conditions in ecosystems that have been invaded by non-native, invasive species

- Conducting research on invasive species and developing technologies to prevent their introduction and providing for environmentally sound control of invasive species
- Promoting public education on invasive species and the means of addressing them.

Following the guidance of Executive Order 13112, the Rawlins Weed Prevention Plan of April 1999 was developed from the original Partners against Weeds, dated January 1996. The current action plan forms the basis for management objectives and actions pertaining to the RFO as a result of a new policy established after the RMP ROD was signed in 1990. Management actions identified in the Rawlins Weed Prevention Plan are listed in Appendix I.

### ***Sensitive Species***

Wildlife habitat and fisheries management decisions received attention in the 1990 RMP. In April 2002, the Wyoming BLM developed a Sensitive Species Policy and List as a reaction to potential loss of habitat from the existing landscape. This policy currently underlies all management decisions made in the RFO pertaining to sensitive, threatened, and endangered species. In recognition of the above policy and list, new sensitive species objectives include maintaining vulnerable species and habitat components in functional ecosystems, ensuring that sensitive species are considered in land management decisions, avoiding a need for species to be listed under the *Endangered Species Act*, and prioritizing needed conservation work with an emphasis on habitat.

The BLM's order of priority for the management of all special species is as follows: (1) listed T/E species (2) proposed T/E species, (3) candidate T/E species, (4) BLM sensitive species, and (5) state listed species. All management actions should follow this action priority as appropriate.

It is the intent of BLM to emphasize inventory, planning consideration, management implementation, monitoring, and information exchange for the sensitive species on the list, in light of the statutory and administrative priorities mentioned above.

The goals of this sensitive species policy are to—

- Maintain vulnerable species and habitat components in functional BLM ecosystems
- Ensure that sensitive species are considered in land management decisions
- Avoid the need for species to be listed under the *Endangered Species Act* and prioritize needed conservation work with an emphasis on habitat.

As habitats or sites for any sensitive or future listed species are identified within the Rawlins RMPPA, protection measures are developed in consultation with the USFWS. The RFO inventories the distribution of sensitive species as part of its management considerations, participates in the development of conservation strategies, ensures that



appropriate NEPA analysis is carried out, ensures that best management practices are applied, ensures that monitoring is ongoing, and exchanges information when requested.

The *Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management* (S&G) that were approved by the Secretary of the Interior August 12, 1997, support the management actions in place. The development and application of the S&Gs are to achieve the four fundamentals of rangeland health outlined in the grazing regulations (43 CFR 4180.1).

Management actions for the Gibben's beardtongue (*Penstemon gibbensii*) Site, the Muddy Gap Cushion Plant Community, and the Persistent Sepal Yellowcress (*Rorippa calycina*) were included in the 1990 RMP. New sensitive plant species-specific management objectives and actions need to be formalized for the Laramie columbine (*Aquilegia laraminesis*), the Nelson's milkvetch (*Astragalus nelsonianus* or *Astragalus pectinatus* var. *platyphyllus*), the cedar rim thistle (*Cirsium aridum*), the Weber's scarletgilia (*Ipomopsis aggregata* ssp. *Weberi*), the pale blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium pallidum*), and the Laramie false sagebrush (*Sphaeromeria simplex*).

The following threatened and endangered species designated by the USFWS are blowout penstemon (*Penstemon haydenii*), Utes ladies' tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*), and Colorado butterfly plant (*Gaura neomexicana* ssp. *coloradenis*).

Management actions include—

- Conducting site-specific surveys for populations
- Undertaking conflict resolution with USFWS
- Avoiding potential habitat where possible
- Protecting known populations
- Conducting case-by-case examinations of any proposed surface-disturbing activity to determine potential adverse effects and appropriate mitigation to minimize those effects
- Managing developments, uses and facilities temporally with regard to grazing management and spatially in regard to development of facilities to avoid damage to the sensitive plant species
- Continuing with establishing trend studies.

Note: See Appendix E (Biological Assessment) of the *Record of Decision and Environmental Impact Statement for the Continental Divide/Wamsutter II Natural Gas Project, Sweetwater and Carbon Counties, Wyoming, May 2000*, as an example of management actions and mitigations measures applied in the RMPPA.

### **2.3.16 Visual Resources**

VRM decisions were discussed briefly in the 1990 RMP. In March 2000, *Instructional Memorandum No. 2000-096* was released by the BLM Washington Office, directing that, recognizing case-by-case exceptions for valid existing rights and grandfathered uses, all WSAs should be classified as Class I and managed according to VRM Class I management objectives until such time as the Congress decides either to designate the area as wilderness or release it for other uses. The VRM class acres identified in the 1990 RMP have been adjusted and can be found in the corresponding section of Chapter 3.0 of this document.

Currently, existing vegetation and topography are retained, where possible, to screen and reduce visual impacts from proposed activities and development. Strategies for restoration and reclamation that will reduce long-term visual impacts by decreasing the amount of disturbed areas are being pursued.

### **2.3.17 Water Quality and Riparian Areas**

Management objectives for riparian areas are to maintain, improve, or restore stream condition and function. This direction can be found in the *Riparian-Wetland Initiative for the 1990's*.

Current riparian objectives and management actions are an integral part of all resource management decisions. BLM consequently monitors important riparian and wetland areas and flood plains and areas with identified conflicting uses under its management. BLM will implement riparian management, protection, and restoration efforts to achieve Proper Functioning Condition of riparian areas.

All surface-disturbing activities are required to adopt design strategies that serve to reduce erosion and maintain or improve water quality. The areas adjacent to wetlands, riparian areas, and 100-year flood plains, and within 100 feet of the edge of the inner gorge of intermittent and large ephemeral drainages are avoidance areas for surface-disturbing activities and exclusion areas for new permanent facilities. Proposals for linear crossings in these areas are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Riparian habitat often requires more specific management, that may include pastures for control of season or duration of use, smaller riparian pastures, or exclosures. Large or small pastures are used to ensure recovery of the vegetative community and ecological processes. Pastures may be closed to livestock grazing, and AUMs in these pastures would not be available. However, grazing may occur in some instances to meet vegetative objectives on a site-specific basis.

### **2.3.18 Wild Horses**

Management objectives have not changed since the 1990 RMP. New wild horse management policies have been developed since the completion of the 1990 RMP. The monitoring of wild horses will be used to reexamine the AML to determine what levels of

wild horse use, in concert with other uses, will achieve a thriving natural ecological balance.

Horse management actions are coordinated between the Rawlins, Rock Springs, and Lander BLM Field Offices. The RFO is required to consult with federal and state wildlife agencies and all other affected interests during land use and implementation planning for the management of wild horses. Intensive monitoring will continue to focus on determining AMLs and ensuring that a thriving, natural ecological balance is maintained in grazing allotments inside established WHMAs.

Collection of habitat-related monitoring data for WHMAs is performed in conjunction with studies designed for livestock grazing and wildlife. Wild horses will be considered when selecting key areas for placement of monitoring studies. Collection of herd-related monitoring data will be conducted as outlined in the specific HMAP, or if an HMAP has not been completed, is conducted as follows—

- Population levels will be determined by conducting aerial inventories semiannually: summer (August 15) and winter (February 15).
- A fixed-wing aircraft or a helicopter will be used.
- Herd composition data will be collected at the time of gathering wild horses.
- During processing of wild horses for the BLM's Adopt-A-Horse program, data such as age, structure, sex ratios, and color schemes will be collected.
- As the necessary data becomes available, BLM's Strategic Plan for the Management of Wild Horses and Burros will be fully implemented in these allotments.

Wyoming Environmental Assessments and Records of Decision EA# WY030-EA0-037 (2000) and EA# WY030-EA2-007 (2001) established procedures for the management of wild horses in established wild horse herd areas. These procedures will remain in effect as long as they remain appropriate under applicable laws and regulations and include the following—

- Humane care and treatment of horses.
- HMAPs will be reviewed and revised.
- Timely responses to emergency situations and to requests to remove stray horses from private lands will be a priority.
- Regular recurrent population management actions (i.e., a selective removal policy) will be performed to achieve population levels. Fertility control will not be an operational component of population management actions.
- Removals will be targeted at entire family groups to achieve distribution targets.

- Upon the completion of successful removals, applications for changes in grazing use within WHMAs will be given consideration.
- Except in emergency conditions and in response to landowner requests, no removals will be conducted during the period beginning on or about April 1 and concluding on or about July 15 of each calendar year.

### **2.3.19 Wildlife and Fisheries**

#### ***Sensitive Species***

Wildlife habitat and fisheries management decisions received attention in the 1990 RMP. In April 2002, the Wyoming BLM developed a Sensitive Species Policy and List as a reaction to potential loss of habitat from the existing landscape. This policy currently underlies all management decisions made in the RFO pertaining to sensitive, threatened, and endangered species. In recognition of the above policy and list, new sensitive species objectives include maintaining vulnerable species and habitat components in functional ecosystems, ensuring that sensitive species are considered in land management decisions, avoiding a need for species to be listed under the *Endangered Species Act*, and prioritizing needed conservation work with an emphasis on habitat.

#### ***Fisheries***

Considerable effort has been expended since the RMP was finalized in 1990 to maintain and increase habitat for natural production of fish spawned and reared on public lands. Species identified as sensitive species by BLM Wyoming (BLM Wyoming State Director's Sensitive Species List) and found in the RMPPA include the roundtail chub (*Gila robusta*), the bluehead sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), the flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*), and the Colorado River cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki pleuriticus*). This list does not include species designated by the USFWS as federally endangered, threatened, proposed, and/or candidate.

The RFO fisheries program is guided by law, departmental policy, executive orders, etc. Fisheries management objectives include—

- Managing habitat for species that spend all or part of their life cycles on public lands.
- Managing fisheries habitat and participating in conservation planning efforts.
- Managing Wyoming sensitive fisheries.
- Managing habitat to maintain populations of candidate and sensitive species at levels that will avoid endangering the species.
- Considering the economic, social, scientific, and recreational values of fisheries in the RFO area.

For sensitive, threatened, and endangered fish species, the objective is to increase populations on lands administered by the RFO and to restore species and populations to historic ranges, consistent with BLM land use plans, after consultation with federal and state wildlife agencies.

Currently, legislative acts, executive orders, and departmental policy directives direct BLM's general management actions pertaining to fisheries. These include—

- Managing resources on a multiple-use and sustainable yield basis
- Maintaining and improving fish habitat
- Giving priority to species listed under the *Endangered Species Act*, and to those that may become eligible for listing
- Conducting and keeping current an inventory of resources
- Coordinating fisheries inventory, planning, and management with other federal and state agencies, local governments, and Indian tribes
- Complying with appropriate state and federal pollution standards and aiding in the implementation of pollution abatement plans
- Developing and implementing fish habitat management plans as prescribed by resource management plans in cooperation with state fish and wildlife agencies and other interested parties
- Monitoring and evaluating management of aquatic resources.

In addition, the RFO actively prevents the spread of the whirling disease parasite (*Myxobolus cerebralis*) and other invasive species (see *Instructional Memorandum No. WY-030-99-007*). Currently, research is being carried out to develop habitat suitability criteria for fish native to the Muddy Creek watershed, in order to employ science-based habitat models in land management decisions and to avoid possible *Endangered Species Act* listings.

Currently, BLM is developing conservation agreements and strategies for the Colorado River cutthroat trout and the reintroduction of this species. This action is directed by the *Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Colorado River Cutthroat Trout in the States of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming* and the *Conservation Plan for Colorado River Cutthroat Trout in the Little Snake River Drainage, Southeast Wyoming*. These documents should be referred to for in-depth species management actions. Summaries of important management actions found in the abovementioned documents are listed below:

- Maintain areas that currently support cutthroat trout and manage areas for increased abundance
- Maintain the genetic diversity of the species

- Increase the distribution of cutthroat trout where ecologically and economically feasible
- Protect existing and restored ecosystems as well as restoring degraded ecosystems
- Improve watershed conditions
- Increase sport fishing opportunities for public benefit.
- Develop a public awareness program to facilitate cutthroat trout recovery.

### ***Other Management Actions Important to Wildlife***

Wildlife monitoring/protection plans will be developed as necessary to protect important wildlife habitats. These plans will provide additional guidance on avoiding and/or minimizing adverse impacts on wildlife.

### **2.3.20 Special Management Areas**

Most ACECs lie within the checkerboard land ownership pattern in the RMPPA, and consequently the practical implementation of management actions is difficult. The successful implementation of management actions identified in the MSA on BLM-administered public lands is dependent on cooperation between private landowners, federal land agencies, and the State of Wyoming.

WSAs will be managed in accordance with the management policy to ensure that wilderness values are not impaired to a point that will not allow Congress to designate the WSA as a wilderness. Management objectives and actions for most ACECs within the RMPPA have remained unchanged since 1990 and have been realized in most instances.

For the Como Bluff ACEC, management actions for cultural, paleontological, and mineral resources have been sufficient to protect the ACEC value to date. An activity plan will be prepared to provide detailed guidance for management of the Sand Hills ACEC. (Note: The ACEC would only include about 60 percent of the unique vegetation type, and two-fifths of that burned during the wildfires of the 1990s.) An activity plan was not prepared for Jep Canyon, due to complications associated with intermingled land ownership types.

## **2.4 REFERENCES FOR CHAPTER 2 OF THE RAWLINS MSA**

### **Cultural Resources**

Cultural Resource Considerations in Resource Management, United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (Date: May 24, 2002)

State Protocol Agreement Between the Wyoming BLM State Director and The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer (Ratified: April 15, 1998)

**Fire Management**

BLM, Office of Fire and Aviation, January 2001, Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. For complete list of appendixes and reports see [www.fireplan.gov](http://www.fireplan.gov)

BLM, Southern Wyoming Zone Fire Management Plan, June 6, 1998. Amended 2001.

**Hazardous Materials**

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